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ABSTRACT

A study of the relationship between patterns of use of the verb "to be" and reading comprehension had as subjects 103 college freshmen in a developmental program, including 53 black and 50 white students. The students' use of Black English constructions of the verb on a writing skills test and their errors in response to a reading comprehension test were analyzed. It was predicted that students using Black English "to be" constructions would have lower reading scores and would have difficulty reading the easy test items where the "to be" construction was needed to determine the correct answer. The overall results indicated a positive relationship between non-use of Black English and language performance, since students who did not use Black English constructions consistently performed better than those who did. These findings appear to support the literature. However, separate specific hypotheses concerning the relationships of Black English and standard language usage and reading and writing scores, comprehension of easy versus more difficult "to be" constructions, reading comprehension items using "to be" and non-"to be" constructions were also examined and were not always supported by the analyses. (MSE)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND TEST PERFORMANCE BETWEEN URBAN AND SUBURBAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND TEST PERFORMANCE BETWEEN URBAN AND SUBURBAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

This was a descriptive study of the relationship between patterns of the use of the verb /to be/ on a Writing Skills Assessment test and response to reading comprehension questions on the Descriptive Test of Language Skills. An ex post facto design was employed to investigate these relationships by examining the number of Black English constructions on the Writing Skills Assessment test and the number of missed items that contained selected /to be/ categories on the Descriptive Test of Language Skills.

The study population consisted of 103 Special programs college freshmen: 53 Black Students and 50 White Students. The study population was divided into three groups: White non-users of Black English, Black non-users of Black English and users of Black English. Analysis of variance was used to determine differences between the groups in performance on /to be/ items. Correlations were used to determine relationships between reading and writing.

The results of the study indicated that use of Black English was related to reading performance. However, the verb /to be/ was not a strong predictor of performance since

users of Black English performed as poorly on non /to be/ test items as they did on /to be/ test items.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There has been a great debate among college educators regarding the cause of the declining reading scores and what it has signified about the college population (Gene, 1978). Some educators have believed that entering college students, as a whole, were merely less literate than their predecessors (Venable, 1981). These educators have suggested that the reason for this was due to the declining scores which pointed to a change in the demographic characteristics of the student population; this in turn may have been related to the problem of dysfunctional reading and writing abilities (Venable, 1981).

As an example of what was meant by a change in the demographic characteristics of the student population, academicians and researchers pointed to the fact that during the 1950's and 1960's student populations were predominantly white American males, and since then, there have been more women, more Blacks and foreigners (Venable, 1981). However, there were those who point out

that there were always substantial numbers of women, Blacks and foreign students attending colleges throughout the 50's and the 60's (Brown, 1980), and for that reason, it may be concluded that general literacy was a problem for all students.

In view of a general concern about literacy, private and public colleges throughout the United States developed special programs for students whose scores indicated that their reading and writing skills were less than proficient. These students were forced to take remedial courses for non or little credit in order to develop skills essential for successful completion of college (Ledeman & Ribaudo, 1981). For example, according to recent City University of New York statistics (1979), most freshmen who were enrolled in the City University of New York have been deficient in at least one of the basic skills (Lederman & Ribaudo, 1981). For that reason, there have been a variety of diagnostic and assessment instruments used to measure potential college students' abilities across a number of areas, including reading, writing and mathematics (Lederman & Ribaudo, 1981). These proficiency tests have been given to college freshmen. Their performance on these tests has provided indication for placement in courses to improve basic skills.

Although tests have helped to clarify the general level of proficiency required for entering college freshmen, the level of proficiency did not but should have included attention to the specific barriers which have hindered Standard English competence. Research has indicated that those who perform the poorest on standardized tests have been the minority and foreign born students (Venable, 1981). It has been postulated that Black students, as well as foreign born students, come from different cultures and utilize different linguistic systems from that of Standard English and this accounts for poor performance on standardized tests. While it was obvious to most theorists that a foreign student used a different linguistic structure from that of Standard English, it was not always clear to these educators that the student who uses Black English was also using a linguistic system which differed from that of Standard English. For this reason, the present study has focused on the problem of Black English in that it relates specifically to users of Black English.

National reports indicated that students who used Black English score lower on reading tests than those who use Standard English (Harber and Bryen, 1976). Many linguists explained the difference in test performance between users of Standard and Non-Standard English by

suggesting that when a user of Black English read or wrote in Standard English, he first translated into his own language before he could read and comprehend Standard English (Shuy, 1964).

These factors suggested that standardized measures used to determine reading performance may not always provide adequate information. However, since students must still take these tests, it is important to recognize the specific limitations of standardized tests so that a more realistic view of student performance can be acquired. In addition, since users of Black English may perform poorly on test items which most users of Standard English may get correct, dialect or use of Black English may be an important element in the evaluation of students' level of linguistic performance. In light of this, a study which examines the implication of the dialect interference theory, that is, that Black English use interferes with reading and writing ability and performance on standardized tests was deemed worthy of investigation.

Rationale

All languages have grammatical structures which consist of syntax, vocabulary and systems with predictable sound patterns (Baratz, 1973). Children learn lan-

guage in the context of their environment. Consequently, children understand utterances in terms of the structural features in the grammar that they have acquired (Menyuk, 1973). For example, children learn from a very early age that they must speak differently to adults than they do to other children (Penalosa, 1981). They also learn to use the dialect or language appropriate to other social situations. This type of "linguistic socialization includes not only language acquisition and awareness of attitudes towards language and language differences but also what has come to be known as the acquisition of communicative competence" (Penalosa, 1981).

By the time children have reached school age, they have a communicative competence that is representative of their culture and community. It is assumed by the schools that by this time, children have been exposed to the standard English model at home and that they have had opportunities for "language interaction in a wide variety of language environments" (Ruddell, 1971). In essence, children are expected to be able to perform linguistically.

The school system measures linguistic performance in terms of formal language (reading and writing). The school's role has been to foster the dominant culture and language. When students have been placed in a formal

setting where the dominant culture is different from theirs, they are placed at a disadvantage because they are evaluated by cultural and linguistic measures which may be contrary to their language or dialect (Baratz, 1969, Stewart, 1969).

For this reason much has been written regarding the issue of whether or not dialect interferes with Standard English competence as indicated by performance. This issue has been particularly important since the school uses formal assessments (via standardized tests) to evaluate the students' literacy and linguistic ability (Destefano, 1978). To illustrate, some studies have suggested that "ability in Standard English relates positively to reading achievement, while imbalances in favor of non-standard English correlates negatively with reading ability" (Politzer & Hoover, 1974). Thus, this suggests that learning Standard English would facilitate reading achievement. In addition, because many students are evaluated by linguistic measures which may be at variance with their native dialects, it has been theorized that the writing and reading problems of users of Non-Standard English are the results of inconsistencies between the structure of Standard and Non-Standard English (Harber and Bryen, 1976). For example, it has been suggested that when users of Black English

read or write Standard English, they are faced with an interference between the structure of their language and the unfamiliar structure of Standard English (Labov, 1972, Stewart, 1964, Baratz, 1969).

Standard English and Black English syntax differ in areas of syntax, such as the linking verb, the possessive marker, the copula, plural marker, subject expression, verb form, past marker, verb agreement, pronoun form, preposition, future form, "if" construction and /do/ verb form (Baratz, 1969). Baratz has stated that the linguists who study Non-Standard English agree that these differences between Standard and Non-Standard English are "systematized structured rules within the vernacular; they agree that these differences can interfere with the learning of Standard English." Labov (1967) has suggested that the "ignorance of Standard English rules on the part of the speakers of Standard English" and the "ignorance of Non-Standard English rules on the part of teachers and text writers" may be the cause of writing and reading difficulties which occur among users of Non-Standard English.

Knowledge of these rules between Standard and Non-Standard English can be examined through the way the verb /to be/ is used in both linguistic systems. One of the most distinctive verbs in Black English and in standard

English is the verb /to be/. The verb /to be/ may be used to express a variety of tenses in both Standard English and in Non-Standard English. For example, the verb /to be/ can be used in Standard English as an auxiliary or main verb in sentences to express the present, past and progressive tenses; in Non-Standard English the non-use of the verb /to be/ can express those same tenses (the present, past and progressive tenses) (Smitherman, 1977). To illustrate, in Standard English, one may say: "She is here" and in Non-Standard English (or Black English) that same sentence can be expressed by "She here."

When one examines the differences between these sentences, one might assume that the user of Black English simply forgot to insert the /to be/ verb. However, this is not so. Both sentences are grammatically correct in terms of the rules of their respective language. In Standard English, the verb /to be/ is needed in order to make the sentence grammatically correct, but in Black English there is no verb /to be/(zero copula) before predicate adjectives, predicate nominals, auxiliary constructions, contracted forms of /to be/ and it is not used to express the intentional future, since the context is used to signal the tense (Labov, 1972, Wolfram, 1969, Smitherman, 1977).

This suggests that although the surface features of Black English and Standard English might appear similar, they are not. There are Standard English constructions that are not utilized in Non-Standard English (or Black English). These linguistic differences herein described suggest that the verb /to be/ can be used as an example to examine the theory of dialect interference. This theory can be viewed through its relationship to reading and writing performance as measured by Standardized tests. Standardized tests require students to utilize formal language; consequently, if (dialect) interference does occur, it should be most evident in performance on these measures.

Assessment

Many educators have supported the use of writing and reading performance on standardized tests to measure college students' ability and to predict academic performance. It has been generally believed that if college students performed poorly on the reading and writing entrance assessment examinations, they would have problems relating to college level materials. For that reason many colleges have employed placement tests. For example, students who attend many colleges in this country must take the Descriptive Test of Language

Skills (a standardized reading test) and the Writing Skills Assessment test. Students must score at an acceptable level before they are allowed to take upper level college credit courses. Very often, Black students who may have had the least experience with test taking, the least experience with the language of testing or with exposure to Standard English appeared to have performed the poorest on these Standard measures. A reason for this could have been that the language used by users of Black English was different from the language that they were required to produce and recognize when they read and wrote in formal situations (Simpkins and Simpkins, 1981).

Since people in general tend to translate the unfamiliar dialect into their own dialects, students who use Black English often may not hear the differences between their language and Standard English (Wilson, 1980). Therefore, they may very often be unaware of the subtle differences that are not present in their own dialect. One might question whether tests actually measure language competence in cases where users of Black English are concerned (especially if one agrees that users of Black English have a language different from Standard English and that they must translate the unfamiliar structures of Standard English into their own

language before they can write or comprehend Standard English). Consequently, an analysis of the linguistic differences between Black English and Standard English is required if an examination is to be made of the theory of dialect interference and its impact on reading and writing performance in Standard English as reflected through Standardized measures.

Importance of the Study

Research findings by Labov (1972), Stewart (1964) and Smitherman (1977) suggested that Black English is a different linguistic system that has a similar surface structure but a different deep structure from Standard English. Therefore, it may interfere with the students' ability to produce and comprehend Standard English.

In contrast McGinnis (1976), Hall and Turner (1970) suggest that Black dialect does not interfere with Black English speakers' ability to read Standard English since students can understand structures they have difficulty producing. Sternglass (1974), Kirschner and Poteet (1973) suggest that Black dialect does not interfere with Black English speakers' ability to write in Standard English because the processes used in speaking and in writing are different. This research which suggested that Black dialect did not interfere with writing or reading

comprehension was based on the relationship between oral language performance and reading comprehension or oral language performance and writing. It did not include the relationship of dialectic features as it is expressed in the relationship between reading and writing on standardized tests. This is a critical issue since usage of specific dialectic features such as the misuse of the verb /to be/ which may or may not occur in oral language may still be present and may hinder the ability to use certain Standard English features in writing or to comprehend passages dependent on mastery of these features.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the use of selected Black English features reflected structures in writing that interfered with students' reading performance on standardized tests. The determination of whether selected features interfered with students' reading performance was made by a correlation and an analysis of variance which examined particular patterns of the use of the verb /to be/ on both the Writing Skills Assessment Test (a measure of writing proficiency) and the Descriptive Test of Language Skills Reading Test (a measure of reading proficiency).

The analysis of the role of the verb /to be/ was limited to the copula and the auxiliary /be/.

It was conjectured that a relationship might exist between the number of Black English constructions used in writing and the level and quality of students' test performance.

It was also conjectured that the greater the actual proportion of Black English constructions in the writing sample, the lower the score students were likely to achieve on this measure.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be addressed in this study:

H.1 There will be no significant difference in total writing scores between users and non-users of Black English.

H.2 There will be no significant difference in total reading scores between users and non-users of Black English.

H.3 There will be no significant relationship between reading scores and writing scores and group membership.

H.4 There will be no significant difference between groups and performance on easy /to be/ reading test items.

H.4.1 There will be no significant difference in group performance when the same five linguistic variables are used in writing and on easy /to be/ reading test items.

H.4.2 There will be no significant difference between group performance on seven linguistic variables used in writing and performance on other /to be/ easy reading test items.

H.5 There will be no significant difference between users and non-users of Black English in performance on easy /to be/ reading test items.

H.6 There will be no significant relationship between the production of /to be/ items produced in writing and comprehension of easy /to be/ reading test items for users of Black English.

H.7 There will be no significant relationship between /to be/ structures produced in writing and their ability to signal difficulty with reading /to be/test items.

Other Data:

Will there be a significant difference in performance between users and non-users of Black English in the total number of grammatical errors on the Writing Sample?

Limitations

The following were factors which limited or influenced the findings of this research and which were not controlled in this study.

1. Code switching ability may have contributed in unknown ways in the study.
2. The method of assessing reading competence was the Descriptive Test of Language Skills, a multiple choice format, and a test item could have more than one structure governing the correct answer. Also the location of the variable on the reading test was not examined.
3. Choice of topic for the writing test was designed for general assessment purposes and therefore may not have generated a full sample of student usage of /to be/forms.
4. The choice of topic for the writing sample may have affected students' writing performance.
5. The grading of the writing sample was evaluated independently and thus the scores reflected the judgment of others.
6. The use of the causal comparative design in this study prohibited the researcher from knowing whether a particular variable was the only cause or whether there were other causes for the behavior

being studied.

7. There are many variables in testing language. However, this study was limited to examining only one variable in writing and reading.
8. The faculty in the Department of English at each institution graded their respective writing samples. Thus, the expectations of the faculty members may have affected the scoring of the writing sample in unknown ways.
9. The use of one linguistic variable as a discriminator may not have been sufficient for determining members of groups II and III.
10. The reading test directions may have contained structures that were difficult to understand, or particular structures that certain segments of the testing population had difficulty comprehending (i.e., passive voice).
11. The age of the population was not considered a variable. All were defined as adults.
12. The study was limited to examining only Special Programs college freshmen; other college freshmen were not included in the study.

Assumptions

The following are the assumptions of this study:

1. The reading test was similar in format to other multiple choice reading tests.
2. Incorrect answers were a reflection of lack of comprehension; comprehension was affected by knowledge of syntax.
3. Incorrect answers on selected /to be/ structures reflected possible interference wherever it occured.

Delimitations

The following were the Delimitations of the study:

1. The relationship between reading and oral speech was not addressed.
2. The relationship between writing and oral speech was not addressed.
3. All aspects of English usage were not addressed but were limited to the use of the verb /to be/.
4. There was no oral test to determine language usage (Black or Standard English).
5. Code switchers could not be identified.
6. Listening skills were not evaluated.
7. The study did not examine the reading test directions which might have contained structures that required special understanding (use of the passive voice).

8. All college Special Programs freshmen scored within the same range on the Writing Skills Assessment Test. Other college freshmen were not part of the study.

Definitions

In order to avoid ambiguity, the following terms, which were used in the study, are defined here:

Black English: Referred to particular linguistic characteristics, such as the omission of the copula and auxiliary verb /to be/ before the predicate adjective, predicate nominal, auxiliary constructions (ing' verbs), intentional future "gonna" and contractions.

In addition, the term Black English was used interchangedly with the terms Non-Standard English and Black Dialect as it was related to grammatical errors.

Users of Black English in this study referred to those individuals who exhibited one or more of the linguistic characteristic stated above on their writing sample and scored 9 or below on the writing sample.

Communicative Competence or Linguistic Competence - referred to how well one used language within a particular social context (the etiquette of language usage).

Descriptive Test of Language Skills - (D.T.L.S.) referred to the reading test which was used in this study to

determine reading competence.

Dialect Feature - referred to the non-use or the absence of the copula, and the non-use of the auxiliary verb "to be".

Distractor - referred to the /to be/ constructions presented in the incorrect choices on the reading test.

Dialect or Variety - referred to a linguistic form which differed from Standard English in grammar and vocabulary.

Grammatical Errors - referred to the incorrect use of the following grammatical categories: tense shift, subject verb agreement, sentence structure, paragraphing, paragraph development, wording or phrasing, spelling, general punctuation.

Language Performance - was measured by the reading test and writing sample.

Meaning - referred to the deep structure of a language.

Mode - referred to the way in which language was expressed. In this study dialect was examined through two modes of expression: reading and writing.

Special Programs Students - referred to students who are considered by the Board of Higher Education to be economically disadvantaged, and educationally disadvantaged. They must be graduates of an approved high school or hold a high school or equivalency diploma or its equivalent. They must not have previously

attended college or any other post-secondary educational institution. They must be citizens of the United States or have permanent residence status, and have lived in the city for one year prior to the year that they apply for college.

Standard Edited English - referred to the production of those individuals who reflected no Black English or other Non-Standard usage on the writing sample.

Stem - referred to the /to be/ constructions presented in the first part of the questions on the reading test.

Text - referred to the /to be/ constructions presented in the context of the passages on the reading test.

/To Be/ categories - referred to:

Predicate adjective used in Black English ("She rich"). The verb /to be/ is absent before the adjective or adverb.

Predicate nominal used in Black English ("She a nurse"). The verb /to be/ is absent before the noun.

Auxiliary construction used in Black English ("She going"). The verb /to be/ is absent before the "ing" verb.

Intentional future used in Black English ("She gonna eat"). The verb /to be/ is absent before future constructions.

Contractions used in Black English ("She here"). The

verb /to be/ is absent in places where one would use a contraction or the contraction is missing in places where it should be present ("Shes here").

Infinitive used in Black English ("He be a man"). The verb /to be/ is used as the infinitive instead of /to be/.

Invariant copula - This is a feature used only in Black English. The verb /be/ is used to express something that occurs continuously in time, "He be here" or "He bees here". This /be/ construction implies that he is always here or that he is here every day (/bees/ is the hypercorrected form of be).

Writing Skills Assessment Test (W.S.A.T.) - referred to the writing sample which was used in this study to determine writing competence.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to present an overview of the related literature and research which served to provide a theoretical background for the present study.

Linguistic Competence vs. Linguistic Performance

According to Mayher (1982), all users of language have linguistic competence, although all users of language do not have the same level of communication competence. Linguistic competence is referred to as the language system, the connection between meaning and sounds. Communicative competence involves the etiquette of how and what meaning is expressed, (pragmatic factors governing communication, i.e. "how to make appropriate responses; how to take turns, speech functions such as asking questions, giving commands" (Mayher, 1982).

The child develops linguistic and communicative competence at the same time. Communicative competence

can vary from child to child. In fact it is assumed that by the time the child reaches school age he has developed a certain level of communicative competence. This level of communicative competence is based upon environmental and sociological factors; thus, the child's language performance is directly related to his language environment, including the available language model and opportunity for language intervention, his comprehension, strategies and objectives and possibly maturation of his latin language structures (Ruddell, 1971).

Communicative competence is transmitted through one's cultural and language environment. When placed in formal school settings, those who are exposed to a standard form of language may be placed in a more advantageous position than those who are exposed to a non-standard form of language. Users of Non-Standard English are exposed to a language environment which operates on a different set of rules from that of Standard English (social and linguistic): they are often placed at a disadvantage because they are evaluated by cultural and linguistic measures which may be contrary to their dialect (Baratz, 1969; Stewart, 1969).

The functional varieties of language such as informal and formal play an important part in the school setting (DeStefano, 1978). The school measures communi-

cative competence in terms of formal literacy assessment (reading and writing).

For example, DeStefano presents the following model as a description of the components of communicative competencies within the context of the language arts curriculum:

FIGURE I

DESTEFANO'S MODEL OF COMPONENTS AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES

		Process of Decoding (Receptive)	Encoding (Productive)
Modes of Communication	Oral Language	Listening	Speaking
	Written Language	Reading (Seeing)	Writing

An examination of DeStefano's model shows that there are two basic modes of communication, oral and written. Each mode of language (oral or written) has a decoding or receptive process and an encoding or productive process.

The receptive (decoding) process involves the skills of listening and reading. The Encoding process involves speaking and writing. According to this model both reading and writing involve the Written language

(formal) while listening and speaking involve Oral Language (informal).

Theorists such as Webber (1976), Wardhaugh (1969), Dubin and Obshtain (1980) have developed their description of the reading and writing process through the relationship between the speaking and listening process. Webber (1976) maintained that since spoken and written languages conform to the same basic principles of organization, it is reasonable to suppose that the reading process involves the same linguistic process as listening (p.99). She maintained that spoken language precedes written language and that the syntax of the written language tends to be more formal than the spoken variety in the choice of vocabulary and the construction of sentences.

Learning to read entails that one knows the principles by which language is represented. For example, reading is represented in letters rather than in the acoustic smear of speech (Webber, 1976). On the other hand, Webber explained that the British writing system had a more direct correspondence to the phonological system since it led to an existence independent of the spoken variety. Although written language corresponds to a sound segment in the spoken language, it greatly differs in how differences in stress, style and dialect

are expressed. The written system represents meaning in a more direct way. Thus writing is not oral language written down.

Wardhaugh (1969), Webber (1976), Ruddell (1971), Dubin and Obshtain (1980) suggested that a comparison of spoken and written language leads one to the belief that language takes on a different form when it is written down on paper since it follows different principles for the organization of texts and serves different functions from its spoken counterpart. Reading involves a knowledge of special conventions to explain the meaning behind print. Learning to read entails extending one's linguistic ability to assimilate messages in a different form from speech (Webber, 1976; Wardhaugh, 1969; Dubin and Obshtain, 1980).

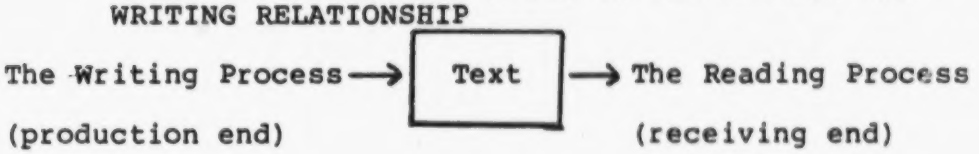
According to Goodman (1965), Smith (1971) and others, reading has been a way of processing information since it has taken into account vision, memory, the identification of language and the integration of linguistic and general knowledge. Reading is based on the ability to use strategies that allow the readers to be good predictors requiring fewer clues (Goodman, 1965; Smith, 1971). In essence, the more reading experiences students have had, the more they know what to expect (Goodman, 1965; Wardhaugh, 1969).

Dubin and Obshtain (1980) also based their model of language on the relationship of speech and listening. In their model the productive process was linked to the receptive process. This was believed to be a practical approach from a communicative point of view.

In the process of speaking, the producer encodes language and the receiver decodes language. Thus, there is a relationship between the writer and the reader although they do not share the same physical space.

FIGURE 2

DUBIN AND OBSHTAIN'S MODEL OF THE READING AND WRITING RELATIONSHIP



In examining the elements in written communication, there appears to be a parallel process between writing and reading which is similar to the relationship between speech produced by the speaker and interpreted by the listener. The writer must employ syntactic, semantic and logical clues to encode the message in the written text. The reader has to use the identical devices to interpret the same message.

Dubin and Obshtain's (1980) model is based on

separate areas: Rhetoric (Writing Process) which is concerned with what goes into the writing process, Textual Discourse Analysis which scrutinizes the text in relationship to grammar, Psycholinguistic Research (Reading Process) which is concerned with capturing characteristics of the good readers by investigating reading strategies (Smith, 1971; Gibson and Levin, 1975). For example, Dubin and Obshtain (1980) maintain that the Writing Process or Rhetoric is divided into areas. The first area is Prescriptive Rhetoric which addresses the rules of grammar and provides cultural norms for good writing. The second area of rhetoric is Contrastive Rhetoric which is related to the culture-bound dimension to traditions of written expression since rhetorical patterns differ from one culture to the next. Consequently, cultural conditioning proclaims the ways in which a logical sequence of main ideas and supporting details are expressed.

Dubin and Obshtain (1980) stated that the Text "is the semantic unit of language which results from a group of sentences related among themselves by discourse devices" (p.355). These devices are syntactic, semantic, and logical in nature and result in a certain cohesion which suits a particular communicative purpose.

The Reading Process

The mature reader employs several strategies when he reads (Gibson and Levin, 1975). He is able to use flexible strategies in order to read different types of materials. This presupposes that one has been able to adjust his strategies because of exposure and familiarity of textual styles. This conclusion was based on the theories of Smith (1971) and Goodman (1965).

Stauffer (1971) suggested that the role of language was related to cognitive development since it was because of language and symbolism that most forms of cognitive functioning become possible. Therefore, growth in writing and reading abilities has been dependent on the learners' motivation to make sense of the written language to coordinate their linguistic and cognitive ability.

On the other hand, Burlings disagreed with the connection between the reading and writing process. Burlings (1973) maintained that "however closely reading and writing may seem to be bound together, we must give writing with standard conventions a much lower priority than reading." (p.63) He advocated that in order to be a good writer one must first be a good reader. The receptive process precedes the productive process since adults are able to read passages that they may have difficulty

reproducing (Burlings, 1973).

Burlings conducted research with both children and adults. As a result he distinguished the process of reading for children and adults. He proclaimed that the process of learning to read for young children was not a "slow motion" imitation of the mature reading process since adult readers used a different and more complex process. For example, the beginning reader decodes word by word and depends heavily on grapho-phonic clues, and on auditory cues and on images which evoke Standard English; while the adult reader can rely on his experiential background and context clues to get meaning (Burlings, 1973).

Since the written language is a more deliberate or formal kind of language, the schools use it to evaluate the students' literacy level. The written language is expressed academically through one's ability to read and to write. These modes of expression are used to measure the students' communicative performance. Reading involves the use of the text which is only printed in standard edited form (DeStefano, 1978). Reed (1974), Baron (1975) and Spolsky (1982) suggest that this may cause a problem for the student who comes from an environment where there has been little opportunity to develop a formal code. Users of Non-Standard English

must account not only for the differences between Standard and Non-Standard English, but for "functional shifts from informal to formal" (Ruddell, 1971).

According to Roger (1971), the formal use of language is expressed through grammar since the purpose of grammar is to describe the process one uses to communicate. Language comprehension appears to be directly related to the control one has over the grammatical and lexical components of discourse (Ruddell, 1971). Although there are many ways to describe or contrast the grammars of Standard and Non-Standard English, the generative-transformational linguistic approach appears to be most employable since this grammatical system attempts to characterize what speakers "know" about their language rather than merely classify utterances as do descriptive or structural grammars (Mayher , 1982; Wardhaugh, 1969).

Generative-transformational grammar which evolved during the 1950's as a reaction to the descriptivists or structuralists, attempts to address both the objective and subjective areas of language. Advocates of this school (such as Chomsky) study not only what is stated but also what is meant (Mayhers, 1982). This grammar consists of a deep structure (semantic) and a surface structure (syntax). Every deep structure can be

represented by a surface structure through the transformation process. The lexical items (words) are present in the deep structure before transformations turn the entire deep structure and lexical content into a surface structure. The final part of this process provides for a set of phonological rules to come into operation to represent the surface structure which is reflected through a phonetic or graphic representation (Wardhaugh, 1969).

The Relationship Between Reading and Writing Performance

The previously discussed models of language presented by Dubin and Obshtain (1980), Webber (1976) and DeStefano (1978) suggested a connection between the productive process (writing) and the receptive process (reading). Theorists such as Shaughnessy (1977), Anderson (1983) and Collins (1979) used these models which were psycholinguistic in nature as a basis for conducting their studies. They proclaimed that receptive and productive language were related and it should not be taught separately in the curriculum since it was through reading that one gained insight into writing.

Shaughnessy (1977) researched the writing errors of college freshmen who used Black English. Her aim was to determine why oral users of Black English used

Standard English so poorly in writing. She found that their writing performance had little to do with intelligence or indifference to academic excellence but because they were beginning students, they were in the process of learning by their mistakes. She discovered that the errors located in the writing samples of users of Black English followed a pattern.

According to Shaughnessy, academic writing is difficult for users of Black English because the written language offered no opportunity (as did speech) to use pitch or tone or to use body language to convey meaning. Therefore, a written language exposed what the user of Black English did not know about Standard English since the written language was different from his oral language. Teachers, in many instances, have had little tolerance for the kinds of errors made by users of Black English. "They perceived certain types of errors as indicators of ineducability." (Shaughnessy, p. 8)

For the users of Black English, errors have become a barrier that has kept them from formal writing and from having something to write. For example, writers have become so intimidated by their fear of errors that they have been unable to produce more than a few lines an hour. Shaughnessy advocated that users of Black English should be taught the grammar of Standard English since

many of these students were never taught it in the Public Schools so that they might gain control of their written language. In addition, she maintained that these students should use books as a model for examining and improving their writing skills since books allow students to "observe the process whereby an idea is explored." (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 255). Consequently, through reading one might be able to develop the structure for writing.

Anderson (1983) conducted a study with the major purpose of comparing reading and writing scores of students in a class in English as a Standard Dialect who received special speech lessons with reading and writing scores of students in traditional college basic skills classes who did not receive that treatment. The study population consisted of 80 college freshmen. Forty students were enrolled in the English as a Standard Dialect Class (ESD); 40 were enrolled in a traditional class.

The students in the ESD classes received an integrated language approach which included speech lessons to improve their reading and writing skills and were taught by one instructor. The second group was given reading and writing instruction where reading skills were taught separately from writing skills and

were not given speech lessons and they were taught by two separate instructors. The basic assumption of this study was that those who are speaking Black English must be able to articulate in Standard English if they are to achieve a high level of performance in Standard English.

Her findings indicated that the experimental group (ESD) made higher grades in writing than did the control group. In addition, students in the experimental group who were taught through an integrated approach performed high on both the writing and reading tests. Consequently, this indicated that a connection existed between reading ability and writing ability. Also, an integrated approach of teaching reading and writing together under one instructor appeared to help students to perform better in both areas.

Collins (1979) conducted a study to determine whether college students would learn to read better through an integrated approach (writing and reading). The population consisted of 70 students who were divided into two groups. The experimental group consisted of those who were exposed to writing practice combined with reading instruction. The control group consisted of those exposed to reading instruction alone. The results of her study indicated that the experimental group improved their reading comprehension significantly more

than the control group that had reading alone. Collins maintained that through writing activities, students can be taught reading instruction and thus an integrated approach to teaching reading has great value for students.

As evidenced by the studies herein discussed, there appears to be a relationship between reading and writing ability. One might use this information to examine the role use of Black English plays in reading and writing. In essence, if Black English features appear in students' writing, it may mean that it will interfere or may have some influence on their reading ability. According to Stotsky (1982) "the research to support the use of writing to improve reading is limited. However, its promise is rich" (p. 338).

Two Linguistic Systems

According to Guth (1973), "Standard English is the prestige dialect of white-collar occupations. It is office English, school English, media English ... the reason for mastering Standard English is that it has national currency as a prestige medium of communication" (p. 106). Thus, in order to be considered educated and upwardly mobile, one must master Standard English, since this is the language of education, administration,

business and journalism.

On the other hand, Black English is a language which originated from the slave trade in America. This language first emerged as a pidgin which eventually became widespread among the slaves and gradually developed into a creole. This development occurred without any formal instruction. This linguistic variety involved the substitution of English for West African language patterns (Smitherman, 1977). An example of this West African language pattern can be illustrated by the omission of the verb /to be/ since the West African languages allow for the construction of sentences without this form (Smitherman, 1977). The development of Black English pidgin is an example of what most learners of a new language do; they try to fit the words and sounds of the new language into the basic idiomatic mold and structure of their native tongue (Smitherman, 1977).

This situation can be reflected when users of Black English attempt to superimpose the grammatical structure of their language on Standard English; they may have more problems learning to read and write than those who use Standard English since they must not only learn to decode, produce and understand written words, they must also translate them into their familiar language and structural frame of reference (Simpkins and Simpkins,

1981). They must distinguish whether patterns of Standard English usage are correct, thereby creating a linguistic insecurity which can influence the number and types of errors on their papers. Reed (1974) suggests that the omission of the verb /to be/ in students' writing samples is an example of a direct interference of Black English.

Reed (1974) suggests that although most interference which occurs as a result of Standard and non-Standard English is primarily surface features of the language, these differences are important to research because the surface structure is a representation of the deep structure (meaning).

Black English and Reading

Goodman (1965) points out that the connection between the surface structure and the deep structure must be made if a reader is to understand what he reads. Reading miscues can occur if the reader is not familiar with the rules that make this connection or if the rule has not been internalized in the readers' own grammar. Goodman (1965), Stewart (1969), Baratz (1969) have suggested that reading becomes more difficult when there is a great divergence between the dialect of the learner and the dialect of reading. In many instances, "users of

Black dialect will find themselves in a school setting where various kinds of languages are being used. One variety may consist of the language which users of non-Standard English use as individuals. This represents the language of parents and community. A second variety is the teacher's language and the third is the language of Standard Edited English which is encountered in books" (Goodman, 1965).

According to Baratz, many middle-class teachers have incorrectly labeled the language of users of Black English as "lazy speech." This results in failing to understand the role of possible influence from the student's linguistic background which consequently leads to negative teacher attitudes toward the child and his language. This leads directly to reading difficulties and subsequent school failure. The user of Black English must not only decode but "translate" the written words into his own language. This forces the dialect user to confront a language that is different from his in terms of its syntax and to learn the meaning of graphic symbols which may result in a vague feeling that something is wrong with his own language (Baratz, 1969).

Politzer, Hoover and Brown (1974) developed a test battery to determine language proficiency of users of Black English. A test was devised as part of this

battery which consisted of a repetition task. Fifteen sentences in Black English and fifteen sentences in Standard English were to be repeated. A Black experimenter individually administered the test to 35 Black Kindergarten children (18 male and 17 female). This test was designed to measure the child's ability to speak both Black English and Standard English. In this study, Black English was "defined as English that follows most of the grammatical rules of Standard English but is 'marked' or recognized as Black features of pronunciation" (p. 28). The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which productive ability in Standard English or Black English was related to reading ability scores. The results of this study indicated that standard or bidialectal speakers achieved better on the standard reading test than the Black English speakers. Since there was a significant negative correlation of proficiency in Black English with reading test scores, it suggests that learning Standard (rather than "unlearning" of Non-Standard) is one of the possible approaches to the reading problems of Black English speakers. Thus, the results of this study showed that the ability to perform in Standard English correlates positively to reading achievement, while imbalance in favor of Black English correlates negatively with reading ability.

Consequently, the inability to use Standard English is a handicap in learning to read in Standard English.

On the other hand, there are those who believe that dialect does not interfere with students' reading or writing ability.

McGinnis (1976) conducted a study with seventh grade Black students. The purpose of his study was to examine the relationship between oral language and reading achievement. It was hypothesized that Non-Standard dialect hinders reading acquisition and that control of Standard dialect was essential to the task of reading. McGinnis used two techniques to study speech variables. A face-to-face interview was conducted with each student. This technique was used to determine the forms of speech used in formal social contexts for the study population. The second technique employed the use of an imitation task. The purpose of using this technique was to determine the pupil's ability to handle various types of constructions. This task involved using sentence pairs developed by Baratz (1969). Each student received one score on each of the linguistic variables. Students also received reading achievement scores which were taken from school records.

The results of McGinnis' study indicated that control of Non-Standard language was not a hindrance to

reading performance since both the good readers and the poor readers had similar ability to decode and generate non-standard forms.

Hall, Turner and Russell (1973) conducted a study to determine whether Black dialect interfered in communication between Black English speaking students and Standard English speaking teachers. The purpose of the study was to test whether the language Black children acquired was different from Standard English in grammatical features that impaired written and oral communication. In conducting this study, they used two grade levels with four cultural sub-groups. They developed a test and a technique for evaluating the groups they selected for Black English transformations, which they considered to be possible antecedents of Standard English and a comprehension problem for speakers of Black English. These features were the omission of the possessive 's', the omission of the past (-ed) ending, the omission of the critical phrase markers, and the omission of the third person singular marker (-s). For example, the research procedure required that a set of three pictures be drawn for each stimulus sentence. The first picture represented the Standard English translation; the second picture represented an alternative that should have been equally plausible for

Black Non-Standard English speakers if they were using their imitation as the basis for comprehension rather than the Standard English sentence they were imitating (Hall, Turner, Russell, 1973). The third picture contained critical aspects of the sentence without any of the relationships that could be acquired from either translation. The study population consisted of 28 boys from each of four subcultures and two grade levels. The subcultures included urban lower-class Black, urban lower-class White, rural lower-class White and suburban middle-class White. All subjects were individually administered the imitation comprehension tests and the Raven Colored Progressive Matrices.

The results of the study indicated that imitation performance was not highly related to reasoning ability and that for both first-grade middle-class White and first-grade lower-class Black subjects, the better imitators were the better comprehenders. The first-grade Black subjects in the study showed significantly less Standard English dialect imitations than the other subcultural groups on the third person singular dialect items. Also the results of the study indicated that there were no significant differences among the three lower-class groups on comprehension scores. Thus the theory that Black dialect interferes with comprehension

of Standard English was not supported.

Sternglass (1976) conducted a study with 304 remedial writing freshmen from two community colleges (223 White students and 81 Black students). Students were requested to use their "best" formal writing skills in writing their compositions. The purpose of this study was to provide data that would show which grammatical features students could control in their writing and which features they needed to practice within the college composition course or writing laboratory instruction. Each paper was analyzed to identify and quantify the frequency of each error (Sternglass, (a) p. 259). The grammatical features were grouped into seven categories: past tense, past participle forms, form of /to be/, non-standard subject-verb agreement, articles, prepositions, pronouns. Every paper was analyzed to determine the number of times either a Standard or Non-Standard form occurred. The results of her study indicated both Black and white students made the same types of errors with the exception of the "invariant be." However, there were quantitative differences in the use of Non-Standard forms in regard to the race of the user, in that Black students used the Non-Standard forms more frequently.

A study conducted by Kirschner and Poteet (1972) examined the types and frequency of non-standard usage in

written English by college remedial English students. This study consisted of 109 randomly selected remedial college students (they were identified as those who score the lowest in the lowest quartile in the Comparative Guidance Placement Program). The average age was 24.5 and ranged from 18 through 50 years of age. The ethnic breakdown was 85 Black, 13 Hispanic and 11 white students. The study population further consisted of 84 females and 25 males. The mean family income for all groups was under $6,000.

The study population was given 60 minutes to write a paper which described what they hoped to learn from the English course in which they were enrolled.

The researchers discovered the following non-standard usage categories: spelling, punctuation, capitals, wrong word (e.g., using affect for effect), fragments, run-on sentences, plurals (e.g., using childrens for children), verb agreement, misplaced modifiers and others (e.g., errors which occurred only once or twice but not as a pattern). The results of this study indicated that "there were no significant differences between the Black, white and Hispanic samples on the distribution of non-standard usage categories and their relative frequency" (Poteet and Kirschner, 1972).

Many of these research studies which have suggested

that Black dialect does not interfere with reading ability are based upon the relationship of oral language and reading. For example, McGinnis (1976) did not examine the role of dialect as it relates to writing and reading performance. Turner et al. (1973) evaluated the grammatical features of Black dialect with the exception of the verb /to be/. This exception may have made a difference in their findings since languages are better contrasted through the verb systems (Dillard, 1972).

These research studies which have suggested that Black dialect does not interfere with writing ability and suggest there are few grammatical differences between Black, white and Hispanic groups did not examine the verb /to be/ as a specific contrasting feature between Black English and Standard English. Nor did they try to relate the students' grammatical differences to possible problems with reading comprehension.

Mastery of Standard English takes time and practice. Although users of Black English are exposed to Standard English through the media, many are still unable to acquire Standard English. The basic reason for this may be that these students were never taught Standard English proficiency because of the negative teacher attitudes regarding users of Black English (Anderson, 1983; Burlings, 1973; Labov, 1974).

Linguistically speaking, the greatest difference between Standard English and Black English is on the level of grammatical structure since grammar is the most rigid form of language which is least likely to change (Dillard, 1972; Smitherman, 1977). The grammatical differences between Standard English and Black English can be examined through the verb system because the verb system can highlight linguistic distinctions. According to Smitherman (1977) the verb /to be/ can be used to illustrate the differences between Standard English and Black English since it is a structure which is used to express meaning in both language forms.

The verb /to be/ is an important feature in Standard English because "the forms of /be/ do not behave like sentences or like other words that grammarians call verbs" (Thomas and Kintgen, 1974). Because of this, grammarians place the verb /to be/ into a separate category from all other types of verbs. The verb /to be/ is different from all other verbs in Standard English since most verb forms have three or four distinct spelling forms, while the verb /to be/ has eight (Thomas and Kintgen, 1974). In addition, it can be used as a linking verb (auxiliary) and as a main verb in formulating sentences (Akmajian and Henry, 1980) since the auxiliary can be used to formulate questions when

placed at the front of the sentence as well as statements.

The forms of /be/ (am, is, are, was, were, has been, was being) are the most common auxiliary or linking verbs in Standard English. Basically /be/ can function as a main verb in sentences, such as, "He is noisy" and it can so appear with any of the auxiliary verbs, such as, "He is being noisy" (Akmajian and Henry, 1980). These sentences are some examples of the ways the verb /to be/ is used in Standard English. From these examples, it may be concluded that it would be very difficult to create sentences in Standard English without utilizing the verb /to be/.

Smitherman (1977) states that the omission or use of the verb /to be/ is the most distinctive feature in Black English since it is used to express a variety of tenses in Black English. She states that there is a rule for when and how one should use the verb /to be/ in Black English. For example, /be/ is used to refer to a situation or event which occurs regularly, "The coffee bees cold," "Everyday the coffee is cold"; however, be is absent when the event is not repeated, "The coffee cold" "Today the coffee is cold." /Be/ can also work in conjunction with the contracted form of will ('ll)'. When the forms of /be/ are used, they are simplified so that

/is/ and /was/ usually serve for all subjects, singular or plural. Also, the "non be" rule is related to relationship or situations that are fixed in time. According to Wolfram (1974), Smitherman (1977) and others, the verb /to be/ is absent before the predicate adjective (She too tall), the predicate nominal (She a nurse) the auxiliary construction (She waiting), the intentional future (She gonna wait) and contractions (She here).

Labov (1972), Thomas and Kintgin (1974) suggest that the forms and functions of the verb /to be/ can be described through transformational generative grammar. According to Wardhaugh (1969) the Transformational Grammar theory is the position that language has two dimensions: a surface level and a deep level. The surface level represents the word arrangement and grammatical units -- the way a sentence is spoken, or written. The decoding process in listening and reading takes place at this level, whereas the deep structure refers to the underlying syntactic semantic relationships which provide interpretation (Wardhaugh, 1969). This grammar is popularly used by many grammarians to explain linguistic similarities and linguistic differences.

For example, the following sentence can be compared in Standard English and in Black English through the use

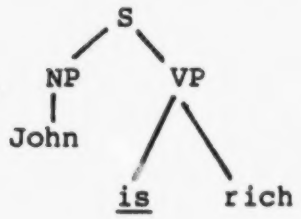
of Transformational-Generative Grammar:

FIGURE 3

TRANSFORMATIONAL DIAGRAMS OF BLACK ENGLISH AND STANDARD ENGLISH

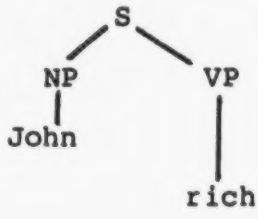
Standard English

1a) John is rich:



Black English

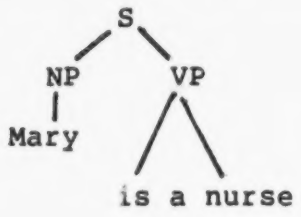
John rich (1b



Notice that the /to be/ is not used in the Black English sentence.

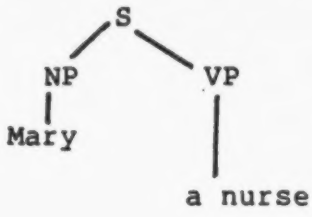
Standard English

2a) Mary is a nurse



Black English

Mary a nurse (2b



In both these examples the verb /to be/ has been omitted in Black English while it is used in Standard English. Larkin (1977) suggests that the different rules

which underlie Standard English can cause problems for the users of Black English if they are unaware of the rule differences. Stewart (1967) points out that the differences between the linguistic system of Standard and Non-Standard dialect can be referred to as "aspect" in the verb system. That is, users of Black English may have difficulty obtaining the meaning of sentences such as "He is busy" because Standard English does not have the aspect distinction that Black English has. For example, in Black English, one could state "He busy" which implies that he is busy today only, or one would say in Black English "He be busy" which implies that he is always busy. In Standard English there is only one structure that is used to represent both concepts "He is busy." Thus, it requires the users of Black English to consciously decide whether the sentence, "He is busy" refers to the moment or implies always. Thus, there are inconsistencies between Black English and Standard English.

This suggests that there are basic underlying systematic differences between Black English and Standard English and that these differences are not superficial since the examples on the previous page show that both sentences are correct according to their respective grammatical rules (Mufwene, 1983).

Black English and Writing

Gray suggests that the inconsistencies between Black English and Standard English can be identified and create problems for students' writing. Gray (1975) points out the three areas of grammatical inconsistencies in writing. First, invisibly rule-based errors are exhibited through the writer's avoidance of a particular grammatical feature. The second grammatical inconsistency is the visibly rule-based. These features are correct by dialect rules but incorrect by Standard English rules. Therefore, these rules are correct according to the users' linguistic intuition. The third type of inconsistency is referred to as the "non-rule-based" interference. These are the written forms which are incorrect in both Black English and Standard English. (For example, placing an /ed/ inflection in places where they don't belong. The /ed/ inflection is not used in Black English since the context is used to indicate tenses). Reed (1974) further suggests non-standard dialect can protrude directly into the student's writing; thus, prohibiting them from relying on their intuition.

Item Response Patterns and Performance

According to Hornish and Linn (1981) response patterns can render valuable information about student

preparation. The same number right score on a test could disguise the "fact that students' incorrect answers may yield important information about student preparation" (p. 133). The response pattern connected with each number right score can vary greatly even on short tests. For example, "there are 184,756 possible patterns that yield a score of 10 on a 20-item test" (Hornish et al., 1981, p. 134). Therefore the information rendered from the patterns that are observed can help the educator or researcher to discover relationships between specific tests and curricula (Hornish et al., 1981).

Schools have used a single total test score to determine performance; thus limited amounts of data are available for particular response patterns (Sato, 1971). This has resulted in "low reliability of individual items and a tendency to attribute a large fraction of the common variance of the items to a single dimension" (Hornish et al., 1981, p. 134).

Sato (1971) suggested that there have been a variety of factors that have resulted in unusual response paterns such as experiences, motivation, text anxiety, exposure to subject matter. These factors might account for a variety of test scores. Thus, items which are easy for one population may be difficult for another population (Hornish et al., 1981). Such variation could lead

to the systematic over or under estimation of an individual's or group's level of achievement, distorting the measurement results.

Consequently, research has suggested that control should be taken to examine response patterns so as to render useful information regarding accurate student performance (Sato, 1971; Hornish et al., 1981).

Standardized Tests

The importance of testing has been well documented. Mehrens and Lehman (1975) have suggested that tests are useful criterion assessment because they guarantee that students have achieved the goal in a specific instructional area. Tests as criterion assessments allow students to demonstrate their accomplishments in a particular course of study. Tests are also needed to establish educational accountability (Schultz and Fortune, 1981).

Schultz and Fortune (1981) also suggested the role of testing is useful in the selection process since it allows the students to be properly placed in accordance with their performance. Thus, when tests are used properly, they provide evidence of achievement independent of subjective judgement (Schultz and Fortune, 1981). However, test bias can prevent their usefulness.

Schultz and Fortune (1981) have described the different types of item bias. The first type of item bias occurs when people are being tested in a subject matter they have not been systematically exposed to. The second type of item bias occurs when the language used to express the item is different from the language used by the testee. Differences in familiarity with language can occur either through a different native language background or through the use of Non-Standard English by the test taker (Fortune et al., 1981). A third type of test bias occurs when the test users are unaware of the presence of either of the other two types of test bias (Schultz and Fortune, 1981).

Schultz and Fortune (1981) maintained that item bias can be determined by statistically conducting an item analysis across subgroups based on cultural, ethnic or sex characteristics.

Green and Griffore (1981) proclaim that test validity is an important part of assessment and that a test's validity can be formed by "atmosphere variables" such as speediness, test messiness, answer sheet format, item type, examiner characteristics, motivation test anxiety and expected use of test results. They advocate that care be taken to insure test validity.

Olmendo (1981) proclaims that "linguistic factors

are potent" (p. 1078) determiners of performance since there is a perception on the part of significant segments of linguistic minority groups that testing is the principle barrier to their opportunity to improve their status. The reason for this is related to the fact that present language tests have not produced information about the language development of Black or Spanish-speaking children who are learning a language other than Standard English. "...Relative language proficiencies are used as a criteria for determining the kind of instruction for linguistic minority children" (p. 1083). Olmendo (1981) maintained that language factors should not be allowed to interfere with performance. Although testing and assessment will continue to be a significant experience of linguistic minority groups, he advocated that a greater emphasis be placed "on assessing the diverse sociocultural and linguistic characteristics of individuals from minority groups" (p. 1084). Reschly (1981) maintains that all good tests discriminate in their identification of differences in competence among people since they were created specifically for that purpose. However, the problems with testing are highly related to how tests are used to make decisions about individuals (Reschly, 1981).

Thus, according to Schulz and Fortune (1981) and

Newkirk (1975), and others, standardized tests may not always adequately measure linguistic competence nor are all tests appropriate for all students since there appear to be linguistic and cultural factors that prevent linguistic minorities from performing as well on standardized tests as their white counterparts (Green and Griffore, 1981). For these reasons Olmendo (1981) stressed the importance of evaluating tests scores with a sensitivty and a linguistic understanding of the group being tested. He advocates that control of the variables which affect linguistic differences between groups be taken so that the tests will reveal results that are useful and for instructional purposes. Others such as Green and Griffore (1981) advocated that test items be examined to insure that they are valid and unbiased. Therefore, these factors suggest that standardized tests will not accurately evaluate student performance unless the appropriate controls to insure fairness are taken.

Summary

There are those who assert that Black English poses a barrier to writing and/or reading achievement. They assume that users of Black English could not effectively match their oral language pattern with the pattern of the written test. On the other hand there are those who

assert that Black English does not pose a barrier to writing or reading achievement. These latter assume that the users of Black English are able to decode Standard English when it is presented orally and they are able to overcome or ignore dialect 'mismatch' in the spoken form. Since the texts are written in Standard dialect they should not impede the decoding process of users of Black English.

The major shortcomings of each position are related to the fact that the studies were based on the relationship between oral language and writing and oral language and reading or both. There was virtually very little research that examined the connection between Black English as it was reflected through the relationship of reading and writing via standardized tests, particularly among college students. Thus, there was a need for a study which evaluated whether use of Black English in writing was significantly related to language performance that controlled the reading and writing relationship.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Many studies have examined issues related to the theory of language interference. Some investigators have explored and delineated linguistic features that distinguish Black English from Standard English. These theorists, such as Labov (1969), Baratz (1969), Stewart (1969), Smitherman (1977), and Anderson (1983) maintained that use of Black English did interfere with language performance, while others such as Sternglass (1974), and McGinnis (1976) maintained that it did not.

The present study has attempted to investigate a theory of dialect interference through examining the "invariant" copula and the deleted copula as it is utilized by users and non-users of Black English on a standardized writing and reading test administered to college freshmen.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the procedures that were used to carry out this investigation. That is, to determine the relationship between use

of Black English constructions (the verb /to be/) on the writing test (Writing Skills Assessment Test) with performance on specific /to be/ constructions on selected items of the reading examination (Descriptive Test of Language Skills), among 103 Special Programs College Freshmen who attend the City University.

Hypotheses

HO.1 There will be no significant difference in total writing scores between users and non-users of Black English.

HO.2 There will be no significant difference in total reading scores between users and non-users of Black English.

HO.3 There will be no significant relationship between reading scores and writing scores and group membership.

HO.4 There will be no significant difference between groups and performance on easy /to be/ reading test items.

HO.4.1 There will be no significant difference in group performance when the same five linguistic variables are used in writing and on easy /to be/ reading test items.

HO.4.2 There will be no significant difference between group performance on seven linguistic variables used in writing and performance on other /to be/ easy reading test items.

HO.5.0 There will be no significant difference between users and non-users of Black English in performance on easy /to be/ reading test items.

HO.6.0 There will be no significant relationship between production of /to be/ items produced in writing and comprehension of easy reading test items with /to be/ structures for users of Black English.

HO.7.0 There will be no significant relationship between /to be/ structures produced in writing and their ability to signal difficulty with reading /to be/ test items.

Other Data

Will there be a significant difference in performance between users and non-users of Black English in the total number of grammatical errors on the writing sample?

Research Design

The present study was designed to investigate a selected aspect of a theory of dialect Black English interference in productive and receptive linguistic

tasks among college freshmen.

This study employed the causal-comparative design since its primary focus was to discover possible cause for a behavior pattern by comparing subjects in whom this pattern is present with similar subjects in whom it is absent or present to a lesser degree. This design is sometimes called ex-post facto research since causes are studied after they have presumably exerted their effect on another variable. The causal comparative method of research is often used in place of the experimental manipulation. Also, this type of research allows the researcher to examine the naturalistically occurring affects after they have occurred (Borg and Gall, 1979).

The causal-comparative design is useful for identifying possible causes of observed variations in behavior patterns, and often yields more results in less time. It can also be used to search for the effect of an observed difference between groups.

For example, in the present study, which was to determine the relationship between uses of the verb /to be/ and student performance on standardized measures, a causal-comparative design was used since it allowed the researcher to examine linguistic differences between groups by selecting a defined population which frequently utilizes /to be/ in a different manner from Standard

English and to select another population which may differ in the use of Standard English in other ways. In this design, we hypothesized that if dialect interfered with students' performance in Standard English, then students who used Black English should have exhibited Black English features in their writing samples and should have performed more poorly on Standardized reading test items with certain /to be/ constructions than the comparison group.

The limitation of the causal-comparative design is that the interpretation of its findings are limited since the researcher does not know whether a particular variable is the only cause or whether there are other causes for the behavior being studied. However, this design can be useful for identifying possible causes of observed variations in behavior patterns (Borg and Gall, 1979).

Although the causal-comparative method is used primarily to search for causes, it also can be used to search for effects of an observed difference between groups. For example, the research conducted by Jackson and Cosca (1974) on ethnically mixed classrooms in the Southwest used this design to determine whether teachers behaved differently toward Chicano and Anglo students in their classes. Observers went into ethnically mixed

classrooms and tallied the frequency with which teachers directed behavior toward Anglo and Chicano students. The results of their study indicated teachers favored Anglos by praising or encouraging them more often. In this study, teacher behavior was not the cause of the observed differences between the two ethnic groups since teachers' use of praise cannot cause a student to be Anglo or Chicano. The fact that student is Anglo or Chicano may have effects on teacher behavior (Borg & Gall, 1979).

Setting:

The testing sessions took place at two colleges; one located in a suburban community; the other located in an urban community. These two areas were selected because it was believed that these areas would render the greatest number of students who use Standard English and Black English respectively.

The urban campus (School A) is located in an inner-city community in which, according to the 1980 census bureau, the population is over 75% Black. The suburban campus (School B) encompasses an area in which the population is more than 85% white.

The ethnicity of the study population was identified by the Special Programs Director in School A and the Placement Officer in School B to insure that the study

populations could be characterized as linguistically different.

Population and Sample

In this study, a stratified sample was used so that particular subgroups (users and non-users of Black English) in the population would be represented. "Stratified samples are particularly appropriate in studies where the research problem requires comparisons between various subgroups." (Borg & Gall, 1979, p.187)

In the present study, the study population consisted of a stratified sample of a total of 103 Special Programs college freshmen. These students were selected from two placement sessions: December 1981; January 1982. The two testing sessions included a total of 600 students, of which 130 students met the criteria (scored below 10 on the writing sample); 60 were selected from School B and 70 were selected from School A; 27 students were identified as non-native users of English by their writing samples and were not included in this study. Thus the students used in the study consisted of all Special Programs students who took the placement exam on the dates indicated above. These test dates were chosen because they were the dates when the largest number of students were tested.

Although students could score up to twelve points on the writing skills assessment test sample (see Appendix X), students who scored in the range of 1 - 9 were selected since these students would most likely be users of Non-Standard English. This rationale is based upon research which indicated a difference between use of Standard English and test scores (Harber and Bryen, 1976). Only Special Programs college freshmen who had writing scores in the 1 - 9 range were selected for this study.

In accordance with the Board of Higher Education, students who are eligible for Special Programs must be economically disadvantaged; educationally disadvantaged; graduates of an approved high school or hold a State high school or equivalency diploma or its equivalent, have not previously attended college or any other post-secondary education institution; must be citizens of the United States or have permanent residence status, and have lived in the City for one year prior to the semester for which they are applying.

Of the total college populations on both campuses, approximately 500 students in school A and approximately 250 in School B are selected for Special Programs based on the above criteria. The study population had an academic average of less than 80%, ranked at the 65th or

lower percentile of their graduating class and consisted of a mixture of males and females.

The Writing Skills Assessment Test (see Appendix III) and the Descriptive Test of Language Skills (see Appendix I) were selected because they are standardized tests which are used as placement tests by the City University. They are used to determine the students' level of literacy and whether they need to register for Basic Skills courses. Because this is a study which was designed to measure the students' use of language as measured by standardized tests, it was believed that tests that college freshmen had taken in order to be considered proficient in Standard English were the best instruments to use for this study.

The Descriptive Test of Language Skills was administered by the City University as part of the required placement criteria. The placement officer at each campus administered the test to groups of students during scheduled dates. For example, the placement tests from the Fall, Spring semester were given in October, November, December and January. The largest numbers of students came for the testing dates in December and January. (Interview with placement officer, School A, 1982). The Descriptive Test of Language Skills was scored by computer. Students received a raw score ranging

from 1 -45 for the total number of correct answers.

Instrumentation

The Writing Skills Assessment Test required students to select and write about one of two essay topics within a 50 minute period (Appendix III). The Writing Skills Assessment test was graded by two instructors on a scale of 1 through 12 (see Appendix X).

Each instructor read the writing sample separately; after the first instructor graded the given writing samples, a sticker was placed over the given score and then they were distributed to the second instructor. Finally, both instructors graded the same set of writing samples. A third reading was required only when both instructors did not concur.

The Writing Skills Assessment Test has a high construct validity because it consists entirely of a writing sample and, thus, it requires students to demonstrate the skills and abilities associated with the construct being assessed, minimal Writing Competencies for college-level work (Greenburg, 1981).

The reliability of the Writing Skills Assessment Test is demonstrated through holistic procedures. For example, the essays are read quickly, but with full attention, by readers trained to share common standards.

The basis of judgment is not the presence or absence of specific features of writing, but rather the reader's immediate general impression of the overall effectiveness of the essay. According to McColly (1970), Cooper and Odell (1977) high-inter rate reliabilities can be achieved when raters are trained with either a borrowed or self-devised holistic scoring guide. McColly (1970) discovered that holistic scoring was the most reliable in a comparison of three types of rating essays.

The Educational Testing service has been employing holistic scoring since 1960 in the evaluation of student essays at the university. A three-year review of writing audits was conducted by the City University. The results of their findings, as indicated by the indices of reliability they examined, illustrated that the writing skills assessment test has a high degree of inter-rater reliability.

> The rates of agreement between college and audit readers on the pass/fail dimension exceeded 80% each year, indicating a rate of inter-rater reliability which is acceptable for such instruments; the mean total scores awarded at the colleges and in the audit differed by less than a point; point discrepancies between the total scores assigned to each essay at the colleges and the audit indicated negligible differences for the large majority of essays. In addition, the inter-rater reliabilities of the official scores compare favorably with those found in

other large scale testing programs. (Ryzewic, 1982).

The three year review of writing audits indicated that correlations between the scores assigned by Readers 1 and 2, (there are two readers who read each essay) exhibited equal patterns of consistently high relationships. The correlations between readers 1 and 2 were over 0.80, thus indicating a rate of reliability between raters which made this test acceptable for use. (Ryzewic, 1981)

The Descriptive Test of Language Skills

The Descriptive Test of Language Skills has been widely used in over 35 colleges throughout the U.S. as a diagnostic assessment instrument for reading assessment and placement (College Board, 1982). This was a reading test that measured the student's ability to read material written on college level. The test consisted of 14 paragraphs with 45 multiple choice questions. The 45 questions were divided into three cluster scores:

(1) Understanding main ideas (15 questions)

(2) Understanding direct statements (13 questions)

(3) Drawing inference (17 questions)

There were 14 passages which the student had to

read within a 30 minute time span. This was a multiple choice question test where the student had to select the correct response by selecting letters, A-D. The reliability of this test was determined by the Kuder-Richardson formula. (The numerical indices derived from the reliability are called coefficients of reliability.) The coefficient of reliability of the reading test was .89. Usually, "a very reliable test would have a reliability index of above .90; a reliability index of less than .85 suggests that a careful review of the test is in order." (A Reader's Guide to Test Analysis Reports, ERS, 1981, p. 8). Thus, it fell within acceptable range.

Standardization:

The validity and reliability of the Descriptive Test of Language Skills (DTLS) were established from a sample of the total group of students who participated in a pilot study of the test which was conducted by the College Board during 1977-1978. (A Reader's Guide to Test Analysis Reports, 1981). In this pilot study, 4,234 students from 16 two-year and four-year colleges were administered the DTLS. The colleges included public and private institutions and selective and nonselective institutions from all regions of the country. The

analysis sample consisted of 830 students from the pilot study group who took all five subtests of the DTLS and who were registered in 10 of the 16 participating colleges. (Guide to the use of the Descriptive Test of Language Skills, 1978). The 830 students in the sample obtained scores similar to those achieved by the large group (Guide to the Use of the Descriptive Test of Language Skills, 1978). The content validity of a test is determined by the degree to which the test items represent the subject matter to be sampled.

The construct validity of the test can be determined by the skills area included in the tests and the manner in which those skills are tested. The DTLS is in many respects typical of standardized reading tests and thus does not depart to any great extent from generally accepted views of what skills or reading tests should measure and how proficiency should be measured. For example, the reading comprehension test is based on "the traditional sub-skills approach and included understanding main ideas, understanding direct statements and drawing inferences" (Morgulas, 1982, p. 5).

According to the test publisher, "the DTLS has employed the types of questions that are widely used in the measurement of language skills." (Guide to the Descriptive Test of Language Skills, 1978, p. 41).

The passages which are used to determine comprehension are based on a variety of sources including college textbooks and works of fiction. These books addressed subjects such as science, the humanities and contemporary problems (DTLS Test Development Rationale, 1977). The passages on the test are short and contain no more than 100 words. According to the test developers, "this is viewed as a positive feature since it allows the measurement of reading skills in a context designed to minimize fatigue, boredom and fear of failure." (Guide to Descriptive Test Language Skills, 1978 p. 41).

The Predictive Validity is the extent to which a test accurately indicates the quality of future performance in the area for which it is used as a predictor. "It is evidenced by correlations between test scores and measures of later performance." (A Reader's Guide to Test Analysis Report, 1981, p. 6).

Using data from a pilot program, the College Board conducted a study to determine the relationship between DTLS scores and end-of-term grades in regular and remedial college writing courses. Correlations ranged from -.02 to .67 with the median between .31 and .42. The correlations between reading comprehension grades in regular writing courses ranged from .02 to .57 with a median of .42 (Morgulas, 1982), which indicated a

moderate relationship exists.

According to the publisher, "one would expect only moderate correlations between test scores and writing course grades." (Guide to the Use of the Descriptive Test of Language Skills, 1978, p.41). The reason for this is explained by the relationship between scores on a test taken at the beginning of the semester and course grades which not only reflect writing but motivation and effort in the course and the effectiveness of instruction. In addition students who are required to take Basic Skills Writing courses would be those who received low reading scores on the DTLS (Morgulas, 1982).

Procedures

Identification of /to be/ Features

In order to measure the usage of the verb /to be/on the writing test, an evaluation sheet was developed. It contained 6 forms of the verb /to be/ as stated by Smitherman (1977). This evaluation sheet was validated by 4 experts in the fields of reading and linguistics. Each expert was given a sheet containing a list of five /to be/ categories. (See Appendix III). They were asked to add or delete when necessary. As a result a 6th category was added: "infinitive". The "habitual be" was also added as a 7th category with an explanation that

this form only occurs in Black English.

After the study population was selected based on their writing samples (range 1-9), the 103 subjects in the study were further evaluated by the writing evaluation sheet which was designed to determine whether they were users of Black English. The writing linguistic scale consisted of 7 linguistic categories related to the verb /to be/. Each instance where the verb /to be/ was incorrectly used, the student received a check mark next to the linguistic category it represented and the sentence where the error occurred was recorded. Students received a total score for each linguistic variable. For example, the researcher recorded every time that the /to be/ verb was missing by placing a check mark next to the appropriate category and then writing the actual sentence next to that category. Once the writing sample was completely evaluated, the students were given a total score for the writing sample:

Zero Black English Categories = non-users of Black English

1 or more errors = users of Black English

As a result, three groups were created: white non-users of Black English (Group I), Black non-users of Black English (Group II), and Black English users (Group III). Group II was subdivided since Group I demonstrated

no Black English usage.

Group III consisted of 27 students who made at least one error in at least one of the seven categories.

Group II consisted of 26 students who did not make any Black /to be/ errors (but might have made other Black English errors not discussed in this study) Group I consisted of 50 white students who did not make any Black English errors.

Group IV (a subdivision of group III) consisted of Black English users who made specified /to be/ errors on the writing test. The number of students in group IV varied according to the type of /to be/ writing error.

Validation of /to be/ Items on the Reading Test

Each linguistic category on the reading test was verified by two of the validators (see Appendix V) to determine whether it was properly categorized and if the understanding of the verb /to be/ was needed in order for the student to get a correct answer. For example, if the student needed to know auxiliary constructions in order to get a correct answer, the test item was labeled as an auxiliary construction test item (see Appendix VI).

The validators indicated their response regarding each test item on the right hand side of the booklet. After this process was completed, the validators or

experts signed their names and were asked to state additional comments regarding the evaluation or validation process, if they had any (see Appendix II).

The discrepancies were referred to a third judge, who then made the final judgment regarding whether the code should be changed or omitted. (See Appendix VI for code sheet.) There were 8 discrepancies.

Writing Evaluation Process

All the writing samples on two evaluation sheets were evaluated (see Appendix IV). One point was given for each error found in the writing sample. The first evaluation sheet was used to determine general categories of errors, i.e. run-on sentences, subject and verb agreements, general punctuation, verb tense sequence, wording and phrasing of sentences (see Appendix VIII). The second evaluation sheet consisted of the scale of Black English linguistic categories. Once this was completed, the writing samples were blindly evaluated by ten (10) experts (see Appendix V). Each expert was given 10-11 writing samples to examine for accuracy. If they felt that they were accurate, they signed their names on a sheet indicating this; if they felt that the papers were not graded accurately, they indicated this on the papers which fell into that category; those papers were

then re-evaluated by one other expert.

Item Analysis of the Reading Test (Descriptive Test of Language Skills).

An item analysis of the Reading Test was performed by the student researcher and validated by reading experts. In every instance where the verb /to be/ was used in the passage, the question (stem) or choice (distractor), it was coded. For example, if the /to be/ feature appeared before predicate adjectives, a code 1 was used. If the /to be/ feature occurred before predicate nominals, code 2 was used; if the /to be/ feature occurred before auxiliary constructions, code 3 was used; if the /to be/ feature occurred in the intentional future, code 4 was used; if the /to be/ feature occurred in contractions, code 5 was used; if the /to be/feature was used as part of the infinitive, code 6 was used. There was no code 7 on the reading test since the invariant copula does not occur in Standard English.

In addition, each item was examined to determine its level of difficulty as stated by the test developers. Easy /to be/ items were separated from difficult /to be/ items. Easy items were separated from difficult items so that comprehension problems would be kept to a minimum.

From this item analysis of the reading test, it was discovered that 19 out of 45 items were /to be/ items. 13 out of the 19 items were easy /to be/ items; the other 6 were difficult /to be/ items. The level of difficulty was determined by the College Board. They stated that a difficulty level of .69 and above was considered an easy test item; below .50 difficulty level was considered difficult (see Appendix VI).

Procedures for Collecting Data:

Writing samples and reading test scores and answer sheets were collected from two colleges in the City University through the placement office in School B and through the Special Programs Director in School A.

Once this was done, only the test materials of students who were identified as Special Programs students were examined to determine whether they fit the criteria.

Students were placed into groups based on the college community they were selected from; for example, students who were selected from the School B college population were placed into group 1, students who were selected from the School A college population were placed into group 2. The addresses of all students in the study were examined to insure that they actually resided in either of the communities.

Data Analysis:

A one-tailed test of significance was set at the .05 level to determine significance within and between groups of students.

For Hypothesis 1, the difference between total writing scores and group membership was determined by analysis of variance.

For Hypothesis 2, the difference between total reading scores and group membership was determined by analysis of variance.

For Hypothesis 3, the relationship between reading and writing scores and group membership was determined by the Pearson Correlation Coefficient.

For Hypothesis 4, 4.1, and 4.2, the difference between use of Black English in writing and difficulty with easy reading test items was determined by the one-way analysis of variance.

For Hypothesis 5.0, the difference between group membership and performance on /to be/ easy reading test items was determined by analysis of variance.

For Hypotheses 6.0, 7.0, the correlation between group membership and the number of /to be/ items in writing and easy /to be/ reading test items was determined by the Pearson Correlation Coefficient.

For other data, the difference between group

membership and the total number of grammatical errors was determined by analysis of variance.

Pilot Study:

A pilot study was conducted during the fall of 1982. The pilot study consisted of a sample population of 8 students; 4 students from the School A Community and 4 students from the School B Community.

The purpose of the pilot study was to determine whether the two groups differed in the types of /to be/ construction errors they made on the writing sample and to determine whether the Evaluation Scale developed by the researcher would be useful in identifying students who used Black English (deleted copula and/or the "invariant" be) in their writing sample.

In conducting the pilot study, the following procedures were employed:

The students' writing samples were examined in items of a set category of /to be/ features. (See Appendix VII). The writing evaluation scale of /to be/ Black English was employed. Features that existed in the students' writing sample were "blindly" examined by two experts in linguistics.

Students' writing samples were evaluated a second time by the same two linguistic experts to determine

general areas of difficulties in Standard English. These grammatical errors were individually written next to each error as it occurred.

Although the sample used for the pilot study was small, the results indicated:

(a) There were differences in the types of /to be/ and general writing errors made by each group.

(b) There was a need to develop a second evaluation sheet which would be able to properly categorize the types of general errors made by all students.

(c) The Evaluation Scale of Linguistic Categories (Black English) could be used to identify users of Black English. (See Appendix VII).

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The primary focus of this investigation was the relationship between use of Black English and language performance. The Black English constructions selected for study were those most frequently identified in the literature as the most distinctive characteristic of Black English (Smitherman, 1977). This characteristic was the absence of the copula (the verb /to be/). According to Labov (1974) and Smitherman (1977), the verb /to be/ is absent in the following constructions in Black English: (1) predicate adjective, (2) predicate nominal, (3) auxiliary constructions, (4) intentional future, (5) contractions, (6) infinitive. The invariant copula was also examined as it is a feature used only in Black English.

Subjects were administered two tests. The Writing Skills Assessment Test and The Descriptive Test of Language Skills were administered to determine the subjects' proficiency in reading and writing. Only

Special Programs students who were native users of English and who scored below 10 (out of a total of 12 points) on the Writing Skills Assessment Test were selected for the study. Users of Black English in writing were determined through administration of a Linguistic Evaluation Scale of Black English categories based on Smitherman's model (1977) of the copula deletion. A final evaluation scale was administered to all subjects to determine the frequency of occurrence of grammatical errors in writing. This evaluation scale contained the following categories: (1) run-on sentences, (2) subject verb agreement, (3) general punctuation, (4) verb tense sequence, (5) wording and phrasing. One point was given for each error found in the writing sample.

All items of the Reading Test were analyzed to identify easy test items that were constructed with the verb /to be/. Easy /to be/ items were used in subsequent analysis so that the difficulty level would not interfere with comprehension. The difference between groups was determined by analysis of variance. The relationship between use of Black English and language performance was determined by the Pearson correlation coefficient.

Demographics

The population studied consisted of three groups of 103 students. The total population included 41 male and 62 females, (39.8% male and 60.2% female). The non-Black group (Group I) contained 22 (44%) males and 28 (56%) females. The Black group which demonstrated no Black English linguistic structures (Group II) consisted of 5 (19.2%) males and 21 (80.8%) females. The Black group which demonstrated usage of at least one Black English linguistic structure (Group III) included 14 males (51.9%) and 13 females (48.1%). Table I highlights the above information:

TABLE 1

THE PERCENTAGE OF MALES AND FEMALES IN EACH GROUP

Groups	N	Male	N	Female
I	22	44%	28	56%
II	5	19%	21	81%
III	14	52%	13	48%
TOTAL %	41	40%	62	60%

Findings

Findings with regard to each hypothesis will be discussed in the following section:

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant difference in total writing scores between users and non-users of Black English.

The means and the standard deviations were computed for each of the three groups. The non-Black group had the highest scores on the writing sample (WSAT) (mean 7.1 and S.D. 1.3, range 6-9) followed by the Black group who demonstrated no usage of Black English (mean 6.9 and S.D. 1.8, range 1-8), followed by the Black group who demonstrated use of Black English (mean 5.6 and S.D. 2.6, range 1-8). See Table 2.

TABLE 2

WRITING AND READING MEAN SCORES BY GROUP

Groups	N	Writing Score $\bar{X}$	S.D.	Score Range	Reading Score $\bar{X}$	S.D.	Range
I	50	7.1	1.3	6-9	28.4	9.1	10-42
II	26	6.9	1.8	1-8	24.8	5.6	16-40
III	27	5.6	2.6	1-8	22.8	6.3	14-38
TOTAL	103	6.6	2.0	1-9	26.0	7.9	10-42

An Analysis of Variance and test for linearity of trends was applied to determine whether there was a significant difference between the means of the three groups. Results from this test indicated both significant differences between means and a significant linear pattern of mean scores.

For differences between groups the analysis yielded an F-ratio of 9.68 (with 2 and 100 degrees of freedom), which was significant at the .001 level. The linear trend analysis yielded an F (1,100) of 16.31 (p=.001) for the linear trend. The test for a non-linear trend in the data was not significant F(1, 100)=3.05). The statistical results indicated a significant correlation (eta=.40) between the dependent variable (group membership) and the independent variable (writing score).

TABLE 3

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF WRITING SCORES

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F
Between groups	64.74	2	32.37	9.68*
Linearity	54.53	1	54.53	16.31*
Dev. from lin.	10.20	1	10.20	3.05
Within Groups		100		

*p < .001

Tukey H.S.D. contrasts were computed on the means for the three groups; the groups I and II had significantly higher scores than did group III. As a result Hypothesis 1 could be rejected with confidence.

Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant difference in total reading scores between users and non-users of Black English.

Means and standard deviations of reading scores for each group are contained in Table 2. The mean score for all subjects was 26.1 based on a total of 26 items and the standard deviation was 7.9. The scores ranged from 10-42.

An Analysis of Variance test was applied to determine whether there was a significant difference between the means of the three groups. Results from this test indicated significant differences and a linear pattern of mean scores between groups.

The between groups F ratio was 5.24 with 2 and 100 degrees of freedom, which was significant at the .01 level. The test for linearity was also significant with an F of 10.27 with 1 and 100 degrees of freedom ($p < .002$). The test for a deviation from linearity was again non significant ($F < 1.0$) (See Table 4).

For the reading scores, the Tukey H.S.D. contrasts

indicated that group I had significantly higher mean scores than did group III.

TABLE 4

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF READING SCORES

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F
Between groups	610.65	2	305.32	5.235*
Linearity	598.77	1	598.77	10.67*
Dev. from lin.	11.88	1	11.88	0.204
Within Groups	5831.88	100	58.319	

*p .01

An eta statistic was calculated to determine the degree of association between the predictors (group membership) and performance on the reading test (DTLS). The resulting value of .31 indicated that there was a moderate and inverse association between use of Black English and reading achievement. The results of the analysis of variance indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected with confidence.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant relationship

between reading scores and writing scores regardless of group membership.

Pearson Correlation Coefficients between reading scores and writing scores were computed to test this hypothesis. The Correlation Coefficient for all subjects was .19 which was significant at ($p < .05$) level. The Correlation Coefficient for Group I was .20. This correlation was not significant. The Correlation Coefficient for Group II was .33 which was moderately significant at the .05 level. The Correlation Coefficient for Group III was -.16 and was not significant (see Table 5).

TABLE 5

PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS OF READING AND WRITING SCORES FOR ALL GROUPS

Group	N	Correlation(r)
Total	103	.19*
1	50	.20
2	26	.33*
3	27	-.16

*($p < .05$)

The Coefficients herein described indicated a significant correlation of reading and writing scores for

the entire population. While correlations for group I and II were positive, only that for group II was significant. For group III the correlation was negative in direction and non-significant. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected only for group II (Black non-Black English users) but not for the other groups.

Hypothesis 4: There will be no significant difference between groups and performance on easy /to be/ reading test items.

The mean scores and standard deviations were computed for all three groups to compare student performance in reading easy /to be/ test items. Easy items were those items which ranged above .69 (which meant that at least 70% of the population was expected to get the item correct according to the Educational Testing Service). Each /to be/ test item was coded by two reading experts and labeled as containing a particular /to be/structure(s) (i.e., predicate adjective) if the particular structure or structures were needed to obtain a correct response.

There were a total of 6 easy /to be/ items where two /to be/ structures were needed in order to determine the correct answer. There were two easy /to be/ items where three /to be/ structures were needed in order to

determine the correct answer. (See Appendix V).

The mean score for easy /to be/ items for the total population was 7.7 with a standard deviation of 2.9. Group I had a mean score of 8.4 with a standard deviation of 2.9; Group II had a mean score of 8.5 with a standard deviation of 3.0; Group III had a mean score of 6.1 with a standard deviation of 2.8 (see Table 6).

TABLE 6

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF EASY /TO BE/ READING TEST ITEMS

Group	N	Mean Score of Easy /to be/ Test Items	S.D.
Total	103	7.7	2.9
1	50	8.4	2.9
2	26	8.5	3.0
3	27	6.1	2.8

An analysis of variance was applied to determine whether there was a significant difference among the means of the three groups. The between group F ratio was 6.24 with 2 and 100 degrees of freedom ($p < .01$). Results from this test indicated a linear pattern among groups. The test for linearity yielded an F ratio of 12.32 with 1 and 100 degrees of freedom, significant at

the .001 level. The deviation from linearity was again not significant ($F < 10$). An eta statistic was calculated to further determine the degree of association between the predictors (use of Black English) and reading easy test items where standard usage of any /to be/structure governs the correct answer. This association or correlation was 0.34, which indicated the relationship between the dependent and the independent variable. F indicated that the eta was significant..

TABLE 7

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF EASY /TO BE/ ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F
Between groups	97.69	2	48.85	6.24*
Linearity	96.49	1	96.44	12.32**
Dev. from lin.	6.81	1	6.81	.87
Within Groups	783.42	100	7.83	

*p < .01
**p < .001

Tukey H.D.S. contrasts conducted on the means of all three groups indicated that only the means of group I and III differ significantly. Thus students who demonstrated Black English usage in their writing did not per-

form as well as those students who did not use Black English. For that reason, the null hypothesis was rejected for hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 4.1 There will be no significant difference in group performance when the same five linguistic variables are used in writing and on easy /to be/reading test items.

The mean scores and standard deviation were computed on four groups for each linguistic variable (see Table 7). Group I represented the non-Black non-users of Black English. Group II represented the Black non-users of Black English. Group III represented Black English users who did not make the specified /to be/ error on the writing test; Group IV represented Black English users who did make the specified /to be/ error on the writing test. The mean score for the total population for the predicate adjective was 4.94 with a standard deviation of 1.91. The mean score for the total population for the predicate nominal was 4.1 with a standard deviation of 1.71. The mean score for the total population for the auxiliary construction was 1.74 with a standard deviation of 0.92. The mean score for the total population for the intentional future was 6.73 with a standard deviation of 2.50. The mean score for the total population for the

infinitive was .77 with a standard deviation of .60. The individual mean score for each group on each linguistic variable is reflected in Table 8.

TABLE 8

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF FOUR GROUPS ON PERFORMANCE ON FIVE LINGUISTIC VARIABLES USED IN WRITING AND PERFORMANCE ON THE SAME TYPE ITEM ON THE READING TEST

Grp	Pred. Adj. 8*	Pred. Nom. 7*	Aux. Const. 3*	Intent. Future 2*	Infinitive 3*
Tot	4.94(1.91) N=103	4.1(1.71) n=103	1.75(.92) N=103	.82(.73) n=103	.77(.60) n=103
1	5.26(2.16) n=50	4.4(1.86) n=50	1.90(.84) n=50	1.08(.80) n=50	.92(.57) n=50
2	5.23(1.42) n=26	4.23(1.45) n=26	.98(.19) n=26	.81(.75) n=26	.77(.59) n=26
3	4.09(1.98) n=23	3.69(1.57) n=26	.99(.21) n=23	.82(.85) n=22	.48(.60) n=21
4	4.00(.82) n=4	-- n=1	.50(.25) n=4	.60(.55) n=5	.50(.55) n=6

() = standard deviation
- = too few (n=1) to compute standard deviation
* = no. of items

Analysis of variance was applied to determine whether there was a significant difference among the means of the four groups on each linguistic variable. There were no contraction items on the reading test; nor

were there invariant copula items; thus, there was no way to determine significant difference in performace regarding these two categories.

For the predicate adjective, the between groups F ratio was 2.63 with 3 and 99 degrees of freedom ($p < .05$) and was not significant (see Table 9).

TABLE 9

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS ON THE PREDICATE ADJECTIVE /TO BE/VARIABLE USED IN WRITING AND PERFORMANCE ON THE SAME TYPE OF EASY /TO BE/ TEST ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	27.59	3	9.20	2.63
Linearity	9.65	1	9.65	2.76
Dev. from lin.	5.85	2	2.93	.84
Quad Term	.01	1	.01	.00
Dev. from Quad.	4.68		4.68	1.34
Within Groups	346.06	99	3.50	

*$p < .05$

For the predicate nominal, the between group F ratio was 1.61 with 3 and 99 degrees of freedom n.s. (see Table 10).

TABLE 10

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS ON THE PREDICATE NOMINAL /TO BE/VARIABLE USED IN WRITING AND PERFORMANCE ON THE SAME TYPE OF EASY /TO BE/ TEST ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	13.86	3	4.62	1.61
Linearity	6.57	1	6.57	2.29
Dev. from lin.	2.41	2	1.20	.42
Quad Term	2.06	1	2.06	.72
Dev. from Quad.	.38	1	.38	.13
Within Groups	248.33	99	2.87	

*p < .05

For the auxiliary construction, the between groups F ratio was 1.83 with 3 and 99 degrees of freedom and was not significant (p < .05) (see Table 11).

TABLE 11

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS ON THE AUXILIARY CONSTRUCTION /TO BE/VARIABLE USED IN WRITING AND PERFORMANCE ON THE SAME TYPE OF EASY /TO BE/READING TEST ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	4.50	3	1.50	1.83
Linearity	2.15	1	2.15	2.63
Dev. from lin.	.36	2	.18	.22
Quad Term	.02	1	.02	.03
Dev. from Quad.	.22	1	.22	.27
Within Groups		99		

*p < .05

For the intentional future, the F ratio was 1.24 with 3 and 99 degrees of freedom and was not significant (p < .05) (see Table 12).

TABLE 12

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS ON THE INTENTIONAL FUTURE /TO BE/VARIABLE USED IN WRITING AND PERFORMANCE ON THE SAME TYPE OF EASY /TO BE/ READING TEST ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	2.33	3	.78	1.24
Linearity	.99	1	.99	1.58
Dev. from lin.	.37	2	.18	.29
Quad Term	.01	1	.01	.02
Dev. from Quad.	.27	1	.27	.43
Within Groups	62.20	99	.63	.63

*p > .05

For the infinitive, the between F ratio was 3.37 with 3 and 99 degrees of freedom (p > .05) (see Table 13) and was significant. Tukey contrasts indicated that Group I was significantly different from Group III on infinitive items.

TABLE 13

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS ON THE INFINITIVE /TO BE/VARIABLE USED IN WRITING AND PERFORMANCE ON THE SAME TYPE OF EASY /TO BE/ READING TEST ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	3.37	3	1.12	3.37*
Linearity	1.37		1.37	4.09*
Dev. from lin.	.25		.13	.38
Quad Term	.11		.11	.34
Dev. from Quad.	.22		.22	.66
Within Groups	33.03	99	.33	

*p < .05

It should be pointed out that the analysis of variance indicated that while group IV did not have significantly as much difficulty with infinitive items as did Group II, it did have more difficulty with /to be/easy test items in general. Differences were not significant in either case.

Students who made predicate adjective, auxiliary

construction and intentional future type errors in writing had more difficulty in reading easy test items where standard usage of the same /to be/ structures govern the correct answers. These differences were not, however, statistically significant. Thus the null hypothesis could not be rejected for this population at .05 level. The N of those making predicate nominal errors was too small for an adequate test for significance.

Hypothesis 4.2 There will be no significant difference between group performance on seven linguistic variables used in writing and performance on other /to be/ easy reading test items.

In order to test Hypothesis 4.2, four groups were established (as described earlier in Hypothesis 4.1), the Analysis of Variance was applied to determine whether a difference existed between the predictor (group membership) and reading easy test items where standard usage of other /to be/ structures govern the correct answer. The mean scores and standard deviations were computed for each group on each linguistic variable. Group IV represented Black English users who made the specific /to be/ error on the writing test. There were

13 easy /to be/ test items.

The mean score for the total population for the non-predicate adjective items was 2.72 with a standard deviation of 1.42. The mean score for the total population for the non-predicate nominal items was 3.50 with a standard deviation of 1.59. The mean score for the total population for the non-auxiliary construction items was 5.91 with a standard deviation of 2.45. The mean score for the total population for the non-intentional future items was 6.72 with a standard deviation of 2.50. The mean score for the non-infinitive items was 6.89, with a standard deviation of 2.83. The individual mean scores and standard deviations for each group are reflected in Table 14.

There were 13 easy /to be/ test items. Five (5) items contained only one /to be/ structure which was counted once. However, six (6) items contained two /to be/ structures and therefore, they were counted twice. For example, both the predicate nominal and predicate adjective governed the correct answer for item 4. There were also two easy /to be/ items that contained three /to be/ structures and they were counted three times each. Thus, there was a total of 13 items counted 23 times.

TABLE 14

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR EASY /TO BE/READING TEST ITEMS WHICH DO NOT CONTAIN ONE OF THE SEVEN TYPES OF /TO BE/ STRUCTURES FOR FOUR GROUPS

Groups	Non Pred. Adj. 15*	Non Pred. Nom. 16*	Non Aux. Const. 20*	Non Intent. Future 21*
Total	2.72(1.42) n=103	3.50(1.59) n=103	5.91(2.45) n=103	6.72(2.50) n=103
1	3.16(1.39) n=50	4.0(1.69) n=50	2.64(.37) n=50	7.34(2.61) n=50
2	2.62(1.33) n=26	3.62(1.20) n=26	1.97(.39) n=26	7.04(1.93) n=26
3	2.04(1.36) n=23	2.54(1.20) n=26	4.70(2.20) n=23	5.27(2.31) n=22
4	1.75(.96)	.00 0	4.50(1.73)	5.40(2.30)

Groups	Non Contract. 23*	Non Infin. 19*	Non Invar.Copula 23*
Total	7.66(2.94) n=103	6.89(2.83) n=103	7.66(2.94) n=103
1	8.42(3.13) n=50	7.50(3.12) n=50	8.42(3.14) n=50
2	7.85(2.30) n=26	7.08(2.23) n=26	7.85(2.31) n=26
3	5.47(2.67) n=15	5.86(2.41) n=21	5.89(2.35) n=19
4	6.83(2.25) n=12	4.67(2.34) n=6	6.5(3.07) n=8

()* = standard deviation
* = number of items

For the predicate adjective, the between groups F ratio was 4.38 with 3 and 99 degrees of freedom ($p < .05$) (see Table 15).

TABLE 15

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS ON THE PREDICATE ADJECTIVE /TO BE/VARIABLE USED IN WRITING AND PERFORMANCE ON OTHER TYPES OF EASY /TO BE/ READING TEST ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	24.05	3	8.08	4.38
Linearity	0.20		.10	.05
Quad Term	.18		.18	.10
Dev. from Quad.	.09		.09	.05
Within Groups	182.58	99	1.84	

*p < .05

Tukey contrasts conducted on the means of all four groups for the predicate adjective indicated that group III was significantly lower than group I.

For the predicate nominal, the between groups F ratio was 7.77 with 3 and 99 degrees of freedom (p < .01) (see Table 16).

TABLE 16

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS ON THE PREDICATE NOMINAL USED IN WRITING AND PERFORMANCE ON OTHER TYPES OF EASY /TO BE/ READING TEST ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	49.13	3	16.38	7.77*
Linearity	18.47		18.47	8.77**
Dev. from Linearity	5.82		2.91	1.38
Quad. Term	4.23		4.23	2.007
Dev. from Quad.	0.33		0.35	0.16
Within Groups	208.62	99	2.11	

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

Tukey contrasts conducted on the means of all four groups for the predicate nominal did not denote significant differences between groups I and II, I and IV, and II and III.

For the auxiliary construction, the between groups F ratio was 3.63 with 3 and 99 degrees of freedom ($p < .05$) (see Table 17).

TABLE 17

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS ON THE AUXILIARY CONSTRUCTION USED IN WRITING AND PERFORMANCE ON OTHER TYPES OF EASY /TO BE/ READING TEST ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	60.90	3	20.30	3.63*
Linearity	21.82	1	21.82	3.90*
Dev. from Linearity	4.14	2	2.07	0.37
Quad. Term	0.23	1	0.23	.04
Dev. from Quad.	4.00	1	4.00	0.72
Within Groups	553.31	99	5.59	

$p < .05$

Tukey contrasts were conducted on the means of all four groups for the auxiliary construction indicated that group I was significantly higher than group III ($p < .05$).

For the intentional future, the between groups F ratio as 4.52 with 3 and 99 degrees of freedom (see Table 18) ($p < .05$).

TABLE 18

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS ON THE INTENTIONAL FUTURE USED IN WRITING AND PERFORMANCE ON OTHER TYPES OF EASY /TO BE/ READING TEST ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	76.64	3	25.55	4.52**
Linearity	27.88	1	27.88	4.93*
Dev. from Linearity	11.82	2	5.91	1.05
Quad. Term	.61	1	.61	.107
Dev. from Quad.	11.56	1	11.56	2.04
Within Groups	559.75	100	5.6540	

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

Tukey contrasts conducted on the means of all four groups indicated that group I was significantly higher than group III ($p < .05$).

For the contraction, the between group F ratio was 4.71 with 3 and 99 degrees of freedom ($p < .01$) (see Table 19).

TABLE 19

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS ON THE CONTRACTION USED IN WRITING AND PERFORMANCE ON OTHER TYPES OF EASY /TO BE/ READING TEST ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	110.14	3	36.71	4.71*
Linearity	49.24	1	49.24	6.323*
Dev. from Linearity	36.52	2	18.26	2.34
Quad. Term	18.06	1	18.06	2.32
Dev. from Quad.	29.37	1	29.37	3.77
Within Groups	770.96	99	7.79	

*$p < .01$

Tukey contrasts conducted on the means of all four groups indicated that groups I and II were significantly higher than Group III.

For the infinitive, the between groups F ratio was 3.17 with 3 and 99 degrees of freedom ($p < .05$).

TABLE 20

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS ON THE INFINITIVE USED IN WRITING AND PERFORMANCE ON OTHER TYPES OF EASY /TO BE/ READING TEST ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	71.57	3	23.86	3.17*
Linearity	53.49	1	53.49	7.12**
Dev. from Linearity	4.20	2	2.10	.28
Quad. Term	2.16	1	2.16	.29
Dev. from Quad.	0.71	1	0.71	.09
Within Groups	744.25	99	7.52	

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

The Tukey contrasts conducted on the means of all four groups indicated no groups were significantly different at .05 level of significance.

For the invariant copula, the between groups F ratio was 4.21 with 3 and 99 degrees of freedom ($p < .05$) (see Table 21).

TABLE 21

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS ON THE INVARIANT COPULA USED IN WRITING AND PERFORMANCE ON OTHER TYPES OF EASY /TO BE/ READING TEST ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	99.75	3	33.25	4.21**
Linearity	42.59	1	42.59	5.40*
Dev. from Linearity	17.60	2	8.80	1.12
Quad. Term	5.89	1	5.89	.75
Dev. from Quad.	16.04	1	16.04	2.03
Within Groups	781.35	99	78.89	

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$,

Tukey contrasts conducted on the means of all groups indicated that group I was significantly higher than group III ($p < .05$)

In general, the data revealed a linear relationship between the extent of exposure to Black English and reading and writing test performance. This finding was

supported by several significant trends in the analysis of variance and the lack of any significant non-linear trends.

The results of the analysis of variance indicated that students who used the predicate adjective, predicate nominal, auxiliary construction, and infinitive construction incorrectly in their writing had difficulty in reading other easy /to be/ test items. Thus the null hypothesis could be rejected for this population at .05 level. However, those students who used contractions and the invariant copula on their writing sample had less difficulty in reading easy test items that contained other /to be/ structures. In fact they performed better on those reading test (easy items) than those who did not make that type of error.

Hypothesis 5: There will be no significant difference between users and non-users of Black English in performance on easy /to be/ reading test items.

Using the definition of easy and difficult reading test items created by the Educational Testing Service, it was discovered that 19 out of 45 items contained /to be/ constructions; 13 out of 19 items were easy /to be/ test items and 34 out of 45 test items were easy items (this number included the easy /to be/ item).

The level of difficulty score was used as the value of each item. The more students who got the item wrong, the higher the value of the item. If students got difficult items correct, they were given more points than if they had gotten easy items correct.

An analysis of variance was applied to test this hypothesis. Type of item was included as a repeated measure (split-plot analysis) and the three groups represented a non-repeated between group factor. The means and standard deviation were computed for each group as well as for the two levels of the repeated factor (/to be/ items and non /to be/ items).

The general means of performance on the easy /to be/ items for all three groups was .11 with a standard deviation of .05; on the easy non /to be/ items; the total mean was .09 and the standard deviation was .03. The means and standard deviations for each group on performance on easy /to be/items are reflected in Table 21.

The total range for easy /to be/ test items was 2-13. The total range for easy non /to be/ items was 1-19. Thus all students made at least two errors on the easy /to be/reading test items and at least one error on the easy non /to be/ items.

TABLE 22

THE MEAN WEIGHTED PROPORTIONS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PERFORMANCE ON EASY /TO BE/ AND EASY NON /TO BE/ ITEMS

Group	Easy /To Be/ Mean 13*	S.D.	Easy Non /To Be/ Mean 19*	S.D.
1(n=50)	.13	.05	.10	.03
2(n=26)	.12	.04	.10	.03
3(n=27)	.09	.04	.08	.03
N=103	.11	.05	.09	.03

* = number of items

Results of the analysis of variance are reported in Table 23. The F for the between groups main effect is significant ($F(2,100) = 7.05$, $p > .01$) indicating that the non-Black English speakers had higher scores than did speakers of Black English. In addition, the test for main effect of item type is significant ($F(1,100) = 33.20$; $p < .001$), indicating that subjects found the non /to be/ items more difficult than they did the /to be/ items in general. The interaction of group and item type, however, was not significant.

TABLE 23

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF COMPUTED EASY /TO BE/AND EASY NON /TO BE/ ITEMS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	.04	2	0.017	7.05
1 Error type	.24	100	0.002	
Item type	.02	1	0.016	33.20
Item by group	.00	2	0.000	0.88
2 Error	.05	100	0.000	

*p < .05

These results indicated that all students performed better on the easy /to be/ items than they did on the easy non /to be/ items. Since users of Black English had no more difficulty than did other groups with easy /to be/ items, the null hypothesis could not be rejected for Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 6: There will be no significant relationship between production of /to be/ items produced in writing and comprehension easy /to be/ reading test items for users of Black English.

The correlation between the number of /to be/errors

in writing and easy reading test items was determined by the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The correlation of easy /to be/ reading test items with the writing score was .14 (N.S.). (This correlation only refers to Group III since this is the group which used Black English in their writing.) This finding indicated that there was no significant correlation between the number of /to be/errors in writing and scores on reading easy test items. Thus the null hypothesis could not be rejected for Hypothesis 6.0.

Hypothesis 7: There will be no significant relationship between /to be/ structures produced in writing and their ability to signal difficulty with reading /to be/ easy test items.

In order to determine whether there were critical /to be/ structures in writing which can signal difficulty with ready easy /to be/ test items, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient between number of specific /to be/writing errors and easy /to be/ items on the reading test was computed. This procedure involved correlating the number of writing errors the students made of each type, with the number of /to be/ items they got correct; a negative correlation was expected. The results of this procedure are reflected in Table 24.

TABLE 24

PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR USERS OF BLACK ENGLISH ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF CRITICAL /TO BE/ STRUCTURES IN WRITING WITH DIFFICULTY WITH READING EASY /TO BE/ ITEMS

	Invar. Copula	Inf.	Cont.	Int. Fut.	Aux. Const.	Pred. Nom.	Pred. Adj.
*WTLCS	-.16	-.32*	-.04	-.01	.12	-.06	.01
p	.30	.05	.42	.47	.27	.38	.49

*significance

In all but one case (the infinitive) there was not a significant correlation between writing errors and problems with reading easy /to be/ items. Only the infinitive /to be/ constructions when misused in writing signaled a difficulty with easy /to be/ items.

The positive correlation presented in Table 24 of auxiliary construction and predicate adjective type errors suggested that students who made more writing errors had higher scores on the easy /to be/ items which contained those same constructions (predicate adjective and auxiliary constructions).

In general these findings suggested that there was no significant relationship between errors users of Black

English made on the writing test and the types of errors they made on the reading test.

As indicated all but infinitive type errors correlated poorly with reading test items that contain /to be/ construction. Thus the null hypothesis could not be rejected the .05 level for all error types except infinitive errors.

In the process of conducting the study, other data were examined.

Other Data:

Will there be a significant difference in performance between users and non-users of Black English in the total number of grammatical errors on the writing sample?

In order to answer this question, the grammatical errors were categories of all the writing samples (N=103) on an evaluation scale which contained the following categories: run-on sentences, subject verb agreement, general punctuation, verb tense sequence, wording and phrasing of sentences.

To determine the difference in performance between groups, the mean and standard deviation for the total number of errors for each group was computed. The results are reported in Table 25.

TABLE 25

TOTAL COMPUTED GRAMMATICAL ERROR BY GROUP (MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION)

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Total Population	103	9.4	6.5
Group I	50	5.5	3.4
Group II	26	11.9	6.3
Group III	27	14.2	6.7

*$p < .05$

As indicated, the average number of errors of all types for the total population was 9.4. Group I had the fewest errors and Group III had the most errors. An Analysis of Variance was applied to further determine whether there was a significant difference between the means of the three groups. Results from this test indicated a strong linear pattern of mean scores between the groups (see Table 26).

TABLE 26

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF COMPUTED GRAMMATICAL ERRORS FOR ALL GROUPS

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	1554.8	2	777.4	28*
Linearity	1474.2	1	1474.2	54*
Dev. from lin.	80.7	1	81.7	2
Within Groups	2737.1	100	27.4	

$p < .001$

An eta statistic was calculated to determine the degree of association between the predictor (use of Black English) and total number of grammatical errors on the writing test. The eta was .602.

The Tukey contrasts indicated that group II and group III had a significantly higher rate of error than group I.

The results of these findings indicated that there was a significant difference in mean score between the groups. This was significant at the .001 level.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

The present study was conducted to examine the relationship between the use of Black English and language performance by comparing the types of /to be/ verb errors made by users of Non-Standard English with the types of /to be/ errors made by non-users of Black English on the Writing Assessment Test and on selected test items on the Descriptive Test of Language Skills.

In conducting the study, seven major hypotheses were formulated and explored. The following chapter will discuss the findings of these hypotheses, along with other data findings, in view of the present literature in the field.

Black English (verb /to be/) and Language Performance

Hypothesis 1. The predicted no difference between use of Black English (independent variable) and writing performance was tested. The analysis of variance

indicated a significant linear pattern across all mean scores. Group I used no Black English constructions in their writing and had the highest reading and writing scores, followed by Group II who consisted of Black students who used no Black English /to be/constructions in their writing, and finally Group III, who used Black English constructions in their writing. The null hypothesis was rejected since there was a significant difference in performance.

Hypothesis 2. The prediction of no difference between use of Black English (independent variable) and reading scores was tested. ANOVA indicated a significant difference in mean scores between groups, since the F Score was 5.24 at .05 significance level. Group I had the highest mean scores (28), followed by group II (24), then group III (22). The null hypothesis was rejected since there was a significant difference in performance.

These findings related to hypothesis 1 and 2 indicated that there was a difference between use of Standard English and language performance, as measured by the analysis of variance since the three groups varied in their use of Standard English. There was a significant difference between the groups and use of Black English and writing and reading scores. Both sets of data

indicated that the subjects who exhibited Black English usage tended to have significantly lower writing and reading scores than groups I and II. Group III (Black English users) was significantly different from groups I and II, although groups I and II were not significantly different from each other.

The results of hypothesis 1 and 2 have supported the theories of Reed (1974) and Gray (1975). Reed (1974) and Gray (1975) analyzed the writing samples of college freshmen using a similar population similar to that described in this study. They both believed that lower writing scores among users of Black English could be traced to the inconsistency between the rules of Black English and the rules of Standard English. They found that college freshmen who used Black English had difficulty writing Standard English because the rules that governed Black English did not apply to Standard English. Thus students are unable to rely on their intuition to produce patterns of Standard English. The findings of this study are consistent with that of Reed and Gray.

Hypothesis 3. The prediction of no significant relationship between writing and reading scores for all groups was tested with the Pearson correlation

coefficient. The correlation between writing and reading scores for the total population was .19 at the .05 significance level. The correlations showed that group II had the strongest relationship between writing and reading scores (.33 significance at the .05 level).

These findings were consistent with the findings of Shaughnessy (1977) and Anderson (1983). Both Shaughnessy (1977) and Anderson analyzed the writing and reading skills of college freshmen. They discovered that there was a connection between the students' ability to read and their ability to write and that a good writer must be a good reader since it is through reading that one becomes familiar with the construction of written language.

Another explanation for the results of hypothesis 3 can be found in the language model described by Dubin and Obshtain (1980). Dubin and Obshtain (1980) noted in their study of reading and writing that "there is a parallel process between reading and writing..." (p. 354). Although their study was related to the language process of adult second language learners, this process can be used to describe the language process of the population used in this study. These theorists maintained that the relationship between writing and reading was the same as the relationship between speech

and listening; both speech and writing involve encoding (producing) language and both listening and reading involve decoding (receptive) language.

These findings were contrary to Burlings (1973) theory that receptive language (reading) precedes productive language (writing) since children and adults can receive something they cannot produce. However, in this case the theories of Shaughnessy (1977), Anderson (1983), Dubin and Obshtain (1980) were supported.

Another finding in this data was the negative correlation between writing and reading scores among users of Black English. Since this correlation was not significant (-.16), this finding could be the result of chance. As a result of these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected at .05 significance level only for group II, since group I and group II did not have a significant correlation.

Hypothesis 4.0. The prediction of no significant difference between groups in performance on easy /to be/ reading test items was tested by the one-way analysis of variance.

The results of this statistical procedure indicated that students who used Black English /to be/ constructions in their writing made significantly more

errors on the reading test. There was a linear pattern of scores between groups; however, only groups I and III were significantly different from each other. This finding was consistent with Baratz (1969) and McGinnis (1976).

Baratz (1969) and McGinnis (1976) conducted their studies with both speakers and non-speakers of Black English. Baratz (1969) worked with elementary school students while McGinnis (1976) worked with Junior High School students. Although both theorists based their studies on the relationship between oral language and reading performance, they found that there was a relationship between use of standard English and reading achievement.

These findings were also consistent with the interpretation given to Hypothesis 1, 2, and 3. That is: language performance was related to Standard English usage, and that writing ability was related to reading ability (Shaughnessy, 1977; Anderson, 1983; Dubin and Obshtain, 1980).

Hypothesis 4.1. The prediction of no difference in group performance when the same five linguistic variables are used in writing and on easy /to be/ reading test items was tested by the analysis of variance.

Group I represented non-users of Black English; Group II represented Black non-Black English users; Group III represented expected Black English users who did not make the specified /to be/ error; Group IV represented Black English users who did make that type error.

Groups I and II performed equally well on all easy /to be/ reading constructions although Group I had consistently slightly higher scores. Groups III and IV performed almost equally as poorly on all easy /to be/items, although Group III generally had slightly higher scores. Thus, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected at .05 significance level.

Hypothesis 4.2. The prediction of no significant difference between group performance on seven linguistic variables used in writing and performance on other easy /to be/ reading test items was tested by the analysis of variance. The findings from the four groups used to test this hypothesis indicated that Groups I and II were not significantly different in their mean scores. Group III and Group IV had similar scores with group III having higher scores statistically related on all but these variables: the intentional future, contractions and the invariant copula constructions. There were too few students who made predicate nominal errors in writing to

make any statistical determination regarding this type of difficulty.

Students who made /to be/ contraction errors on the writing sample performed better on reading the other /to be/ easy test items than Group III students who did not make /to be/ contraction errors on the writing sample. The students who used the invariant copula in their writing also performed better on other easy /to be/items on the reading test. These results may be explained by the fact of their absence on these types of constructions on the reading test. This fact might have produced less interference since their presence might have caused difficulty for these students. This explanation would support the advocates of the 'structural mismatch' thesis implied in Hypothesis 1 and 2.

McGinnis (1976) had a similar finding with regard to the copula in reading. McGinnis (1976) conducted his study with Junior High School students on the relationship between oral use of Black English and reading performance. He adapted the speech instrument measures used by Baratz on elementary school students to determine speakers of Black English. He used 6 linguistic variables which included the copula. Although he found that students who exhibited more standard speech tended to have higher reading scores, he did find there was no

correlation between the copula variable and reading test scores. This finding suggested that the copula is not a salient feature in signalling interference (McGinnis, 1976). However, the results of Hypothesis 4.1 and 4.2 were consistent with the interpretation given to Hypothesis 4.0 and 3.0. That was, that writing ability is related to reading ability or that the reading process is related to the writing process (Dubin and Obshtain, 1980; Shaughnessy, 1977; Anderson, 1983).

/To Be/ As a Predictor for Reading Performance

Hypothesis 5.0. The prediction of no significant difference between users and non-users of Black English in performance on easy /to be/ and easy non /to be/ reading test items was tested using analysis of variance. All students performed better on easy /to be/test items. The means of Groups I and II were not significantly different in comprehension of both /to be/and /non to be/easy test items. Group II was significantly different from Group III. This distinguished them from Group III which had lower mean scores.

The findings for this hypothesis indicated users of Black English may process language differently from users of Standard English. Burlings' (1973) theory of language supported by this finding. Burlings' theory is related

to the language differences based on his research with children and adults exhibited both by speakers of Black English and speakers of Standard English. He maintained that the differences between these two language populations were only superficial in nature and did not interfere with comprehension.

McGinnis (1976) in his study with Junior High School students had similar findings. He questioned whether the copula was a salient feature in signalling difficulty in Black English.

Hall, Turner and Russell (1973) worked with Black and white boys, elementary students (from first and fourth grades) from four sub-cultures (urban lower class white and Black, rural lower class white and suburban middle class white). They were administered an instrument measuring imitation and comprehension of four omissions of Black English from standard English (possessive's, past "ed", critical phrase marker, third person singular "s") and the Ravens Colored Matrices.

They found that there were no significant differences among the three lower-class groups on comprehension scores. The middle-class groups performed significantly better on the Ravens Colored Matrices than the other groups, but there were no significant differences among the three lower-class groups. They

found that use of Black English did not interfere with comprehension of Standard English and that differences in performance between groups were attributed to social class.

Although McGinnis (1976) and Burlings (1973) point out that use of Black English does not interfere with reading performance, the theory proposed by Hall, Turner and Russell (1973) would not explain the linear pattern of mean scores in performance presented in Hypothesis 5.0 and present throughout the study. The results of the analysis of variance indicated that there was a significant difference in mean scores by group membership in favor of /to be/ items.

Hypothesis 6.0 The prediction of no significant relationship between the production of Black English /to be/ forms produced in writing and comprehension of easy /to be/reading test items for users of Black English was tested using Pearson correlation coefficient. This statistical procedure indicated that the number of /to be/ errors in writing was generally not related to reading easy /to be/ test items. The general finding did not support the theories of Anderson (1983), Shaughnessy (1977) and Dubin and Obshtain (1980). However, the

findings of Hypothesis 6.0 did lend support to Burlings' theory (1973) that receptive language precedes productive language.

Burlings' theory (1973) was based on his observation and work with children and adults who used Non-Standard Dialect (Black English). His work contrasted the system of Black English with Standard English through phonological and surface structural differences. He maintained that the differences between these two varieties (Standard English and Non-Standard English) were phonological in nature and that the surface structural differences (syntax) between the two linguistic forms were superficial and thus, did not interfere with comprehension of Standard English. He also maintained that the reading process preceded the writing process since one could comprehend something one could not produce.

The statistical procedure used to test hypothesis 6.0 indicated that there was no significant correlation between the number of /to be/ items used in reading and performance on easy /to be/ reading test items for users of Black English.

Hypothesis 7.0 The predicted no significant relationship

between specific /to be/ structures used in writing and their ability to signal difficulty with reading /to be/easy items was tested through the Pearson Correlation Coefficient for each /to be/ category. The results of this procedure indicated that except for the infinitive there were no critical /to be/ structures in writing that could signal difficulty with reading /to be/ easy test items.

It was surprising to find that the students who used the auxiliary construction in writing most frequently, did not have significantly greater problems with understanding the easy /to be/ items on the reading test than did other subjects. One explanation of this finding is that the auxiliary construction is a very commonly used construction in Standard English and thus all students are able to practice it more often (Akmajian and Henry, 1980).

The general relationship between reading and writing presented by Dubin and Obshtain (1980), Anderson (1983), Shaughnessy (1977) was not supported for this hypothesis, although Burlings' theory received some support. The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient also indicated that all but infinitive type errors did not correlate significantly with performance on reading easy test items that contained /to be/. These

findings suggest that /to be/ was a salient feature in signalling writing interference (Reed, 1974) but was not as salient in signalling reading difficulties (McGinnis, 1976).

Another explanation was that the verb /to be/ used along with other Black English constructions (i.e., /ed/ endings) may have been a better predictor of reading interference.

This would support Labov (1972) and Wardhaugh's (1969) theory that the copula was only one key feature of Black English and that other key features exist. For example, Labov (1969) and Wardhaugh (1969) have maintained that the differences between Black English and Standard English involve phonological as well as syntactic differences such as the past-tense markers, the double negative, past tense endings, the controlled "r", the "th" sounds, the plural "s" and others. Both Labov (1972) and Wardhaugh (1969) conducted their research with Junior High School Black Students and found that students who might not have had problems with the copula may have had difficulty with other types of linguistic features. Although the present study was conducted with college students, the same reasoning can be applicable in this instance.

The results of the Analysis of Variance indicated

that with the exception of the infinitive type error there were no significant /to be/ structures that occurred in writing that were associated with a problem in reading /to be/ easy test items. Thus, the null hypothesis could not be rejected at .05 level of significance.

In the process of conducting the study, other data were examined.

Group Membership and Grammatical Errors

Other Data

The question of whether there were significant differences in performance between users and non-users of Black English in the total number of grammatical errors on the writing sample was answered by the Analysis of Variance. This procedure indicated a difference between the use of Black English and the total number of grammatical errors on the writing sample. The results were consistent with the general pattern of the study. Group I had the lowest number of errors and Group III had the largest. These results supported the theories of Reed (1974), Gray (1975), and Shaughnessy (1977) which suggested that use of Black English interfered with writing performance.

Shaughnessy (1977), Reed (1974) and Gray (1975) conducted their research with freshmen from an urban college (a population was similar in kind to the type used in this study). They analyzed the writing samples of their students and discovered that there were linguistic differences in the writing performance between users and non-users of Black English. They found that users of Black English could be identified through their writing samples since the types of errors they made fell into a pattern and were not arbitrary in nature. They discovered that users of Black English were operating with the linguistic rules that were contrary to Standard English, thus they were unable to rely on their intuition when they wrote.

This thesis seemed to be applicable in this instance since the users of Black English had the highest number of errors in Standard English as reflected on the writing test.

On the other hand, this finding did not support the findings of Sternglass (1974), Kirschner and Poteet (1973). They also conducted their studies with college freshmen. Sternglass (1974) used 304 remedial writing freshmen from two community colleges while Kirschner and Poteet (1972) used 109 randomly selected remedial college students (Black, white and Hispanic). Both studies

suggested that there were no significant differences between groups on the types of errors they made, although Sternglass (1973) found the "invariant copula" to be an exception to this finding.

Although these studies suggested that use of Black English did not interfere with language performance, these studies did not screen specifically for users of Black English. Instead they assumed that if Black English interfered, it would be present in the writing samples of Black students. However, not all Black students use Black English (Dillard, 1972). Perhaps if a screening process had taken place where users of Black English could be identified, different results might have been rendered.

The findings of the Analysis of Variance indicated a significant difference in mean scores between groups. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 level. These results were consistent with the general findings of this study which has suggested a relationship between use of Standard English and language performance (Anderson, 1983).

In essence, the findings of this study largely supported the theories of Shaughnessy (1977), Anderson (1983), Baratz (1969), Reed (1974), Gray (1975), Labov (1972) and others that suggested use of Black English

interfered with students' ability to perform linguistically (reading and writing) in Standard English.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The principal focus of this research was to examine the relationship between use of Black English and language performance. The literature surveyed for this work was replete with conflicting theories which asserted that use of Black English interfered with language performance (Labov, 1972; Stewart, 1967) or that use of Black English did not interfere with language performance (McGinnis, 1976; Sternglass, 1973). In most cases, the theory of language was based on the difference between the students' oral language and writing or the relationship between the students' oral language and reading. The authors of such theories (Baratz, 1969; Stewart, 1967) suggested that control of Standard English was essential to language performance and students who used Black English were at a disadvantage since they must translate the code from that of Standard English into their own language before they can comprehend Standard English. On the other hand, there were others (Burlings,

1973; Harber, 1973) who disagreed with this theory.

These theorists proclaimed that the use of Black English did not interfere with language performance since one's receptive language (one's ability to comprehend) was not limited to productive language and that one may be able to receive or comprehend a concept and yet not be able to produce it. The advocates (Burlings, 1973) of this position also suggested that the differences in the types of writing errors made by users of Black English and non-users of Black English were not significantly different.

In this research, the mastery of Standard English was assessed through performance on standardized writing and reading tests.

The present study was designed to determine whether use of Black English among college students interfered with language performance. This question was tested by determining the differences between the use of Non-Standard English 'features' (the verb /to be/) used in writing and the types of /to be/reading test items (easy items) that created difficulty for users of Non-Standard English.

The predictions made in this study were that college students who used Black English /to be/ constructions in their writing would have lower reading

scores and they would have difficulty with reading the easy test items (on the reading test) where the /to be/ construction was needed to determine the correct answer.

Procedure

The 103 Special Programs subjects that were selected for this study came from two college settings. Two groups were created. Students' writing samples were examined. All those who had a writing score above 9 were eliminated from the study. Students who were not Special Programs students and/or second langauge learners were also eliminated from the study. Group I consisted of 50 non-Black students who scored below 9 on the writing sample. Group II consisted of 53 Black students who scored below 9 on the writing sample.

Two writing evaluation scales were developed in order to identify students who used Black English. The first evaluation scale consisted of 7 categories based upon Dr. Smitherman's model (1977) of how the verb /to be/ is used in Black English. This evaluation scale was examined, refined, and validated by experts in the fields of Writing and Linguistics. The seven categories were: the predicate adjective, the predicate nominal, auxiliary constructions, intentional future, contrac-

tions, the infinitive and the invariant copula. Every time a student used one of these constructions in Black English (omitting the verb /to be/ before one of these constructions) the student was given a point by each writing and/or linguistic expert. The papers were first evaluated by the researcher then given to 10 different experts who in turn graded them a second time. The results were compared; the discrepancies were given to a third expert who made the final decision.

The second evaluation writing sheet was adapted from a college writing scale which consisted of general grammatical errors. All students were examined by both tools; as a result, a third group was created: users of Black English. This group was a subdivision of Group II since Group I did not show evidence of Black English usage in their writing.

In order to determine Black English interference in reading, the student researcher coded all /to be/ constructions on the reading test wherever they appeared (in the passage, the stem or the distractor). Each construction was given a number (1-6; the invariant copula could not be coded since it is a term used only in Black English). The reading test was then given to two reading experts to recode and to indicate whether the /to be/ construction was needed in order to get a correct

answer. Conflicts with judgment on grading were given to a third expert to resolve. From this process came a list of reading test items where knowledge of /to be/construction was needed in order to get the correct answer.

The easy and difficult items were determined by the Educational Testing Service. They stated that all reading items with a difficulty level of .70 and above were considered easy test items. The difficult items were those that had a difficulty level of .50 and below. From this, sets of difficult and easy reading test items were established. The researcher was thus able to distinguish easy /to be/items from easy non/to be/items and difficult /to be/items from difficult non /to be/ items by examining the difficulty level of each item and relating to the linguistic description (type of /to be/ construction) indicated by the reading experts.

For purposes of analysis, the following statistical tests were employed:

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the correlation between writing and reading scores and the correlation between the number of /to be/items in writing and easy reading test items.

The Analysis of Variance (F-test) was used to determine significant differences in performance between users and non-users of Black English in usage of any /to

be/ structure in writing and performance on /to be/ reading test items in general; to determine significant differences in writing and reading scores and to determine significant differences in group performance on general grammatical errors.

In addition, the data analysis indicated that there was a relationship between writing performance and reading performance since most students who scored high on the writing test scored high on the reading. This finding supported the theories of Shaughnessy (1977) and Anderson (1983) who suggested that one's ability to write is related to one's ability to read. The findings also suggested that students who used Black English appeared to have more grammatical errors in their writing than those students who did not use Black English. These findings support the theories of Gray (1975) and Reed (1974) who stated that use of Black English interfered with students' ability to use Standard English.

In essence, the general findings indicated a positive relationship between non-use of Black English and language performance since students who did not use Black English constructions consistently performed better than those who did use Black English constructions (comprised of the verb /to be/). This finding appears to support the literature (Baratz, 1969) which relates use

of Standard English with success on standardized tests.

Conclusions

This investigation focused primarily on the surface features of language. Studied alone, it attempts to give a one dimensional view of language.

Some writers such as Baratz (1969), Anderson (1983), Shaughnessy (1977) suggested that use of Black English impaired the students' ability to perform linguistically. Other writers such as Sternglass (1974), Hall, Turner, and Russell (1973) suggested that use of Black English did not interfere with students' linguistic ability.

The findings of this investigation suggested a relationship between use of Standard written English usage and reading performance. In essence, students who used Black English /to be/ structures on the writing sample scored lower on the reading test than those who did not use Black English structures in the writing sample.

Hypothesis 1 and 2 examined the differences between group membership and writing scores and group membership and reading scores. There was a significant association between group membership (or use of Black English) and reading and writing scores.

A linear pattern between groups was reflected in

general performance on the standardized writing and reading test with non-users of Black English scoring higher than users of Black English on these measures.

Hypothesis 3 examined the relationship between group membership and reading and writing scores.

There was a significant relationship between writing and reading ability. For the most part, students who scored well on the writing test also scored well on the reading test.

Hypothesis 4, 4.1, and 4.2 examined the difference between the use of /to be/ in writing and problems with comprehending easy /to be/ test items compared with the same and other /to be/constructions students used in writing. There was a significant difference between writing /to be/ errors and reading easy /to be/ items although students who used the invariant copula and contractions in their writing showed the least indication of problems with easy /to be/reading test items.

Hypothesis 5.0 examined the role of /to be/ and non/to be/ items as predictors of reading difficulty. It was believed that users of Black English would have more difficulty with /to be/ items.

The verb /to be/ did not appear to be a strong predictor of potential problems in reading since students performed better on reading test items that contained easy

/to be/ constructions than they did on reading test items that did not contain /to be/ constructions.

Hypothesis 6.0, 7.0 examined the use of /to be/ in writing for predicting problems with reading easy /to be/test items.

The findings indicated that the verb /to be/ as it is used in Black English is not as salient as one might expect in predicting potential reading difficulty since students who used Black English performed equally as well and better on reading test items that were comprised of /to be/ structures as they did on non /to be/ structures that were not comprised of the verb /to be/. However, the verb /to be/ appears to be useful in identifying users of Black English since the group which it identified as such consistently had less control over Standard English forms.

Other Data examined the difference between group membership and the total number of grammatical errors.

There appeared to be a significant association between users and non-users of Black English in the number of grammatical errors made in writing. The writing sample reflected a linear pattern of mean score differences. Students who did not use Black English constructions in their writing had fewer grammatical errors than those who did use Black English construction

in their writing.

In essence, the subjects in the study with higher writing and reading scores exhibited greater control of Standard English usage.

Implications

It may be that users of Black English have fewer opportunities to practice Standard English and therefore have less control over its use linguistically. This interpretation best explains the results of hypotheses and other data. Students who made contraction errors and used the invariant copula in their writing scored the highest on /to be/ reading test items. The reason for this could be that there were no items of either type reflected on the reading test; thus, there was less interference in reading. Consequently these students were not forced to translate.

The users of Black English who misused the auxiliary construction in writing most often had no difficulty understanding the same auxiliary construction type items on the reading test. One explanation for this may have been that students had receptive knowledge of how this construction is utilized in Standard English, although they were unable to produce it. In addition, the auxiliary construction is one of the most commonly used

constructions in Standard English, since it is used to express a variety of tenses thus, they are more exposed to it and have more practice recognizing it.

In essence, the results of this study indicated a general relationship between use of Standard English and reading and writing performance.

In an examination of the reading test regarding performance on /to be/ items versus non /to be/ items, it was discovered that the users of Black English performed as well on the /to be/items (which was expected to be more difficult) as they did on non /to be/items. In fact, they performed even better on the /to be/ items. The reason for this might be that the non /to be/ structures may have been composed of other linguistic constructions that were not addressed in this study. For example, the past tense marker has been studied by Labov (1972), Burlings (1973) and Steward (1969) as an important feature which can distinguish Black English from Standard English. Labov (1972) suggests that the /ed/ marker is absent from the speech of those who use Black English since its users depend on the context to determine the tense.

The findings of this study indicated that there was little relationship between /to be/ writing errors and /to be/ reading errors. An explanation for these

findings might be that the verb /to be/ is the feature that most students are familiar with. Therefore, they address it first academically (especially since it is an important structure in Standard English), as opposed to other Black English linguistic variables such as past tense markers which might not receive the same attention. This information does not mean to suggest that the verb /to be/ does not interefere with reading performance, but simply that there might have been other structures that might have interfered more and that the verb /to be/may only be able to demonstrate a moderate level of interference when compared with other Black English structures. It might be that other Black English structures not covered are more important in the writing and reading relationships, such as the double negatives, the possessives and the use of the pronouns, third person singular.

The present study has implications for instructors who teach users of Black English. The results of this study suggested that the teacher should allow this population great exposure to Standard English by providing them with many opportunities to break the written code of Standard English via reading and writing, so that they might be able to experience greater academic success on Standardized tests. Teachers and publishers

should be encouraged to develop materials that address linguistic differences so that students might be able to strengthen their control over Standard usage.

Perhaps standardized tests should be analyzed by the teacher so that potential linguistic differences and problems can be identified. This information can not be ascertained from examining raw score test results or grade point average alone. It is suggested that test constructors be careful to construct test items so that they are linguistically fair and appropriate for everyone.

The findings of this study indicated that not all Black students use Black English. In this study group II was subdivided thereby creating a third group. Group II consisted of Black students who did not use Black English; group III consisted of a Black group that did use Black English. In addition, Black English users vary in their use of Black English. Some Black English users made up to six (6) /to be/ errors on the writing sample, while other Black English users made only one /to be/ error on the writing sample.

A final implication of this study was that oral language was not required for research into the theory of language interference. Although the theory of language interference was investigated, oral tests were not used

to identify Black English users; a writing sample was successfully used in its place.

Recommendations for Future Research

It is recommended that the present study be addressed in several ways:

1. It is recommended that the study be replicated using a larger population.
2. It is recommended that the study be replicated with emphasis on more than one and other syntactical Black English features (i.e. past tense markers, the possessive, double negatives).
3. It is recommended that the study be replicated with a similar population but with emphasis on the relationship between the deep structure of Black English and its impact on reading performance.
4. It is recommended that the study be replicated by examining the oral component of language and its relationship to the interaction of writing and reading performance among college freshmen. This would allow the researcher to identify those who are able to code switch and those who are unable to code switch. (This was not done in the present study).
5. It is recommended that this study be replicated

with a younger population (elementary school students) so that the theory of language interference can be tested in terms of a language acquisition theory and/or language development model.

6. It is recommended that the study be replicated with a similar population by examining other reading factors (other than /to be/) that might affect comprehension.
7. It is recommended that teachers be trained in the appropriate techniques of teaching English to users of Black English.
8. It is recommended that standardized tests be analyzed by the teacher in order to provide diagnostic information so that potential linguistic problems can be identified.
9. It is recommended that a study of language differences which examines code switching among elementary school students be conducted.
10. It is recommended that a study of language differences which assesses reading competence using other standardized reading tests be conducted.
11. It is recommended that a study of language differences be conducted which examines test bias

on standardized reading tests.

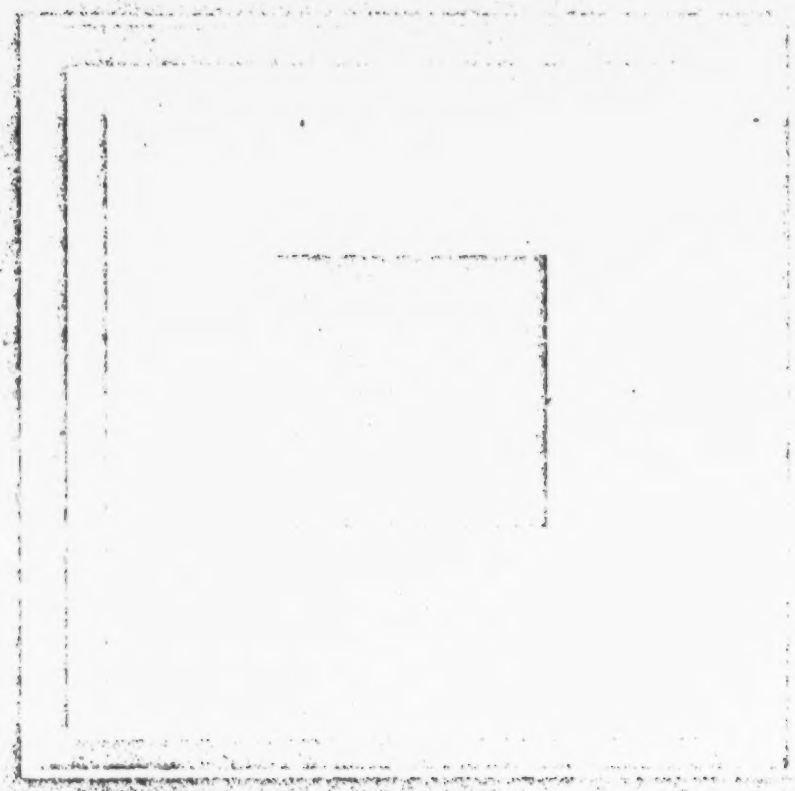
12. It is recommended that a study of language differences be conducted which examines relationship between listening skills and reading comprehension.
13. It is recommended that a study of language which examines the ratio of non standard features to standard dialect features be conducted with adult students.
14. It is recommended that a study which examines the relationship between the choice of topics on a writing sample and the frequency of errors made by college students be conducted.
15. It is recommended that this study be replicated using a cloze test in place of a standardized multiple choice test.
16. It is recommended that a study which examines the use of /to be/ features with regard to academic success be conducted.
17. It is recommended that the differences between group performance and cohesive writing be examined.
18. It is recommended that a study that compares faculty members at various colleges with how they grade their writing samples be conducted.

19. It is recommended that a study that examines logical reading and logical relationships and the issue of test wiseness be conducted.
20. It is recommended that a study which examines the relationship between students' academic background and experience and their general performance on reading and writing tests be conducted.
21. It is recommended that a longitudinal study that examines general reading performance with a population similar to that used in this study be conducted.
22. It is recommended that the relationship between reading and writing be examined using a similar study population which is selected from low reading test scores rather than from low writing test scores.

APPENDIX I

FORM A

COPY OF THE READING TEST
(Descriptive Test Of Language Skills)



READING COMPREHENSION

APPENDIX II

DIRECTIONS FOR EVALUATING THE VERB / to be/ on The Descriptive Test of Language Skills Form A:

The verb /to be/ is represented by the following categories:

1. Predicate adjective
2. Predicate nominal
3. Auxiliary constructions
4. Intentional future
5. Contractions
6. Infinitives

The Descriptive Test of Language Skills has been coded by the researcher. Each number represents its corresponding category. For example 1 represents the predicate adjective; 2 represents the predicate nominal etc. These numbers are indicated on the Reading test booklet wherever the verb /to be/ appears. For example, in the first sentence of the first paragraph, the verb "are" has a number 3 above it since "are gardening" is an auxiliary construction.

Your task, as an expert in this study, is to examine each category placement of the verb /to be/ and to validate whether the verb /to be/ has been correctly identified and categorized. If you find that there is a discrepancy in judgement, please indicate this by circling the verb and by stating your discrepancy on the right-hand side of the booklet. Also, please indicate (on the right-hand side of the booklet) whether the /to be/ construction was needed in order for the students to select a correct answer.

After you have completed the validation process, please sign your name; write any additional comments you may have regarding the evaluation or validation process.

SIGNATURE_____

DATE_____

COMMENTS_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX III

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENT TEST

FORM WN

DIRECTIONS

You will have 50 minutes to plan and write the essay assigned below. You may wish to use your 50 minutes in the following way: 10 minutes planning what you are going to write; 30 minutes writing; 10 minutes rereading and correcting what you have written.

You should express your thoughts clearly and organize your ideas so that they will make sense to a reader. Correct grammar and sentence structure are important.

Write your essay on the lined pages of your booklet. You may use the inside of the front cover of the booklet for preliminary notes.

You must write your essay on one of the following assignments. Read each one carefully and then choose either A or B.

A. In the United States, older people are not appreciated by their families. Their children and grandchildren are often too busy with their own lives to pay much attention to them. This is too bad because older people have a lifetime of knowledge and experience to share with the younger generation, and it's all going to waste.

Do you agree or disagree? Explain and illustrate your answer from your own experience, your observations of others, or your reading.

B. Some people work too hard and too much. In their effort to succeed in school or work, they often do not have time to build good relationships with their friends and families. This effort to succeed is just not worth it.

Do you agree or disagree? Explain and illustrate your answer from your own experience, your observations of others, or your reading.

APPENDIX IV

GRADING INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING SAMPLE

You have been selected to evaluate the following writing samples which have already been evaluated by the student researcher, Irene A. Aponte.

You are asked to evaluate each writing sample twice:

The first evaluation sheet consists of 9 categories. Please indicate the category where the error occurs by writing the sentence next to that category. (Please write the sentence exactly as the student has written it). Write the number of times each error occurs (the number should equal the number of sentences you have written for each category).

The second evaluation sheet consists of Black English categories used in the study. You are only asked to evaluate the verb /to be/. (All other categories have been eliminated.)

Please indicate the omission of the verb /to be/ by writing the sentence where the omission occurs next to appropriate category. (Please write the sentence exactly as the student has written it.)

For example, if the student writes, "She going to school today," that sentence would be written next to category 3, auxiliary constructions.

In addition please indicate the sentence where the omission occurs by writing the category above the sentence. For example "She^{3} going to school today."

If you have any additional questions that have not been addressed, please call me at 735-1980 or 377-3446; or write me at 4524 Kings Highway, Brooklyn, 11234.

APPENDIX V

EXPERT LIST

Phyllis Buford: Ph.D. Associate Professor

As Ph.D. in Education, she has had the opportunity to conduct research related to cognition and reading; in addition, she has taught a variety of reading and writing college courses and has designed a Basic Skills Reading curriculum.

Clara Alexander: Ed.D. Associate Professor

As an Ed.D., she has participated on the CUNY Reading Council; served as a CUNY consultant in Reading; coordinated a college Reading Laboratory and Reading Program and published a variety of articles related to dialect in Reading.

Carolyn Hollinshed: M.S. Instructor

Is a college writing instructor, she holds a Masters degree in Linguistics. She has taught courses in Black English on the college level and has participated in Research on Black dialect and Language performance.

Frank Brown: Ed.D. Associate Professor

As an Ed.D., he has published numerous books and articles. He has also worked with Gregory Simms in developing the New Approach Method Reading Program.

Tom Edwards: Ed.D. Assistant Professor

As a doctor of Education, he has taught Basic Writing Skills for over 7 years. In addition, he has published several articles on writing.

Victor Cummings: M.S. Instructor

As an English as a Second Language instructor, he has a Masters degree in Linguistics; he has also published articles on oral and writing skills related to the ESL population. He has also taught English writing to college students for the past 5 years.

Lawrence Nales: M.S. Instructor

As a teacher of English and Bilingual Education, he holds a Masters Degree in French. He has taught numerous English courses to foreign born adults.

Cheryl Williams: M.S. Instructor

As an instructor of Black English courses at Medgar Evers College, she has presented at National Conferences in the area of the "Linguistically Different Child." She has also served as the Chairperson of the Basic Skills Committee for Medgar Evers College; she has conducted research studies on Black English, its use in oral communication.

Keith Gilyard: M.S. Instructor

As an English Instructor with Medgar Evers College, he has a Masters Degree in Applied Linguistics from Columbia University. He has conducted research on the "Effects of Black pronunciation and reading," as well as research on "Code Switching on Cross Culture." He has presented at National and local conferences in the areas of Applied and Sociolinguistics.

Brenda Greene: M.S. Instructor.

As an instructor of Black English courses, she has a Masters degree in Education from Hunter College and a doctoral student at New York University in English Education. She has presented at National and local conferences on "Writing for Basic Skills Students" in addition she has done research studies in the area of Black English Among Adult Learners.

Carol Reed: M.S. Assistant Professor.

As an instructor with Brooklyn College, she has conducted numerous research studies in the area of Black English. She has numerous publications and written a book on the "Linguistically Different" Student.

Geraldine Aryault: M.S. Instructor.

As director of the Writing Laboratory, she has a masters in English and she has been affiliated with college teaching for over 20 years.

Gloria Lowenthal: M.S. Instructor.

As an instructor with Medgar Evers College, she has taught Reading courses for the past five years. She has a Masters in Reading and has presented at local and national conferences on "Reading Problems of Basic Skills Students".

APPENDIX VI

READING TEST ANALYSIS AS INDICATED BY READING TEST EXPERTS IN THE STUDY OF THE DESCRIPTIVE TEST OF LANGUAGE SKILLS

Item No.	Correct Answer	Level of Difficulty	/to be/ Needed for Correct Ans.	/to be/ Item Type
1	2	.90	No	
2	1	.95	No	
3	4	.92	No	
4	4	.82	Yes	Pred. Adj. Pred, Nominal
5	1	.82	No	
6	2	.76	No	
7	1	.80	No	
8	3	.87	No	
9	4	.86	No	
10	1	.59	No	
11	4	.87	Yes	Pred. Adj.
12	4	.97	No	
13	3	.95	No	
14	3	.94	No	
15	4	.82	Yes	Pred.Adj/pred Nom.
16	1	.70	No	
17	2	.76		Pred,Adj./ Pred Nom.
18	1	.65	No	
19	4	.80	Yes	Pred. Adj.
20	3	.73	No	

Item No.	Correct Answer	Level of Difficulty	/to be/ Needed for Correct Ans.	/to be/ Item Type
21	1	.85	No	
22	2	.66	No	
23	3	.79	Yes	Pred. Nom.
24	2	.74	Yes	Prod. Adj.
25	4	.64	No	
26	2	.77	No	
27	1	.87	Yes	Aux. Const./ Pred. Nom.
28	2	.80	No	
29	2	.49	Yes	Pred. Nom.
30	1	.43	Yes	Aux. Const.
31	4	.83	Yes	Pred. Adj./ Aux. Const.
32	3	.80	No	
33	4	.86	No	
34	1	.79	Yes	Intentional Future / Pred. Nom. Infinitive
35	2	.70	Yes	Intentional Future / infinitive
36	3	.84	No	
37	1	.72	No	
38	2	.49	Yes	Pred. Nom.
39	3	.60	Yes	Infinitive
40	3	.20	Yes	Aux. Constr.
41	1	.47	No	
42	3	.88	Yes	Infinitive / Pred. Adj.
43	2	.85	No	
44	4	.36	Yes	Intent. Future
45	1	.72	Yes	Aux. Const/Pred. Nom. Infinitive

APPENDIX VII

WRITING

EVALUATION SHEET OF SPECIFIC

BLACK ENGLISH CATAGORIES BASED ON THE VERB "TO BE"

Linguistic Catagories	Example	Writing Test
1. Copula before predicate adjectives	She is beautiful He is here	
2. Copula before predicate nominals	She is a girl He is a doctor This is a house	
3. Auxiliary Constructions (includes subjunctive)	She is going to school Be a man May be Could be If I should	
4. Intentional Future 'gonna'	If I were you I will be I shall	
5. Contractions Includes: ain't used in Black English)	She's a girl There's a house	
6. Infinitive	He wants to be a man	
7. Invariant Copula (Habitual Be, only used in Black English)	He be there She bees working	

Code _____ Sex _____

I.D. #. _____ Age _____

Group _____ Reading Score _____

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APPENDIX VIII

WRITING EVALUATION SHEET OF GENERAL GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES

SEX: _____ GROUP: _____

Linguistic Category:	Example:	Total:
Tense shift		
Subject verb agreement		
Run on sentences		
Fragments		
Lack of paragraphing		
Lack of development		
Poor wording or phrasing		
Spelling		
General punctuation		

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APPENDIX IX

WRITING SAMPLE: FACULTY GRADING FORM

Code _____ TOTAL POINTS _____

S.S.# _____ GRADED BY _____

The student starts with 200 points. If he scores between 0-129 he is placed in English W 003 (Basic Writing), if he scores between 130-179 points he is in English W 00? (Advanced Writing), if he scores above 180 points he is in English 100.

NAME OF ERROR	POINTS OFF PER ERROR	OCCURRENCE OF ERROR	TOTAL POINTS DEDUCTED
1. Lack of introductory paragraph	10		
Lack of thesis statement	10		
Developmental paragraphs (Logical development of an argument)	10		
Lack of concluding paragraph	10		
If no paragraphing, student is automatically placed in 003			
2. Run-ons	5		
Comma splices	5		
Fragments	5		
3. Subject-verb consistency	3		
Tense sequence	3		
Pronoun reference	3		
Pronoun case	3		
Errors in inflectional endings	2		
Wording and phrasing (diction)	2		
4. Word omissions	2		
Misplaced modifiers	2		
Dangling modifiers	2		
Improper correlative	2		
Spelling	1/2		
Capitalization	1/2		
General punctuation	1		
Apostrophe	2		

Check if student is ESL.

APPENDIX X

EVALUATION SCALE FOR WRITING ASSESSMENT TEST

6

The essay is competently organized and the ideas are expressed in appropriate language. A sense of pattern or development is present from beginning to end. The writer supports assertions with explanation or illustration.

Sentences reflect a command of syntax within the ordinary range of standard written English. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are generally correct.

5 - 4

The writer introduces some point or idea and demonstrates an awareness that development or illustration is called for.

The essay presents a discernible pattern of organization, even if there are occasional digressions.

The essay demonstrates sufficient command of vocabulary to convey, without serious distortion or excessive simplification, the range of the writer's ideas.

Sentences reflect a sufficient command of syntax to ensure reasonable clarity of expression. The writer generally avoids both the monotony of rudimentary syntax and the incoherence created by tangled syntax.

The writer demonstrates through punctuation an understanding of the boundaries of the sentence.

The writer spells the common words of the language with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Exceptions can be made for the so-called spelling "demons" which frequently trouble even an advanced writer.

The writer shows the ability to use regularly, but not necessarily faultlessly, the common forms of agreement and of grammatical inflection in standard written English.

3 - 2

An idea or point is suggested, but it is undeveloped or presented in a purely repetitious way.

The pattern of the essay is somewhat random and relationships between sentences and paragraphs are rarely signaled.

The essay is restricted to a very narrow range of language, so that the vocabulary chosen frequently does not serve the needs of the writer.

The syntax of the essay is not sufficiently stable to ensure reasonable clarity of expression. The syntax often is rudimentary or tangled.

The writer frequently commits errors of punctuation which obscure sentence boundaries.

The writer spells the common words of the language with only intermittent accuracy.

The essay reveals recurrent grammatical problems; if there are only occasional problems, this may be due to the extremely narrow range of syntactical choices the writer has used.

1

The essay suffers from general incoherence and has no discernible pattern of organization. It displays a high frequency of error in the regular features of standard written English. Lapses in punctuation, spelling, and grammar often frustrate the reader. OR, the essay is so brief that any reasonably accurate judgment of the writer's competence is impossible.

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